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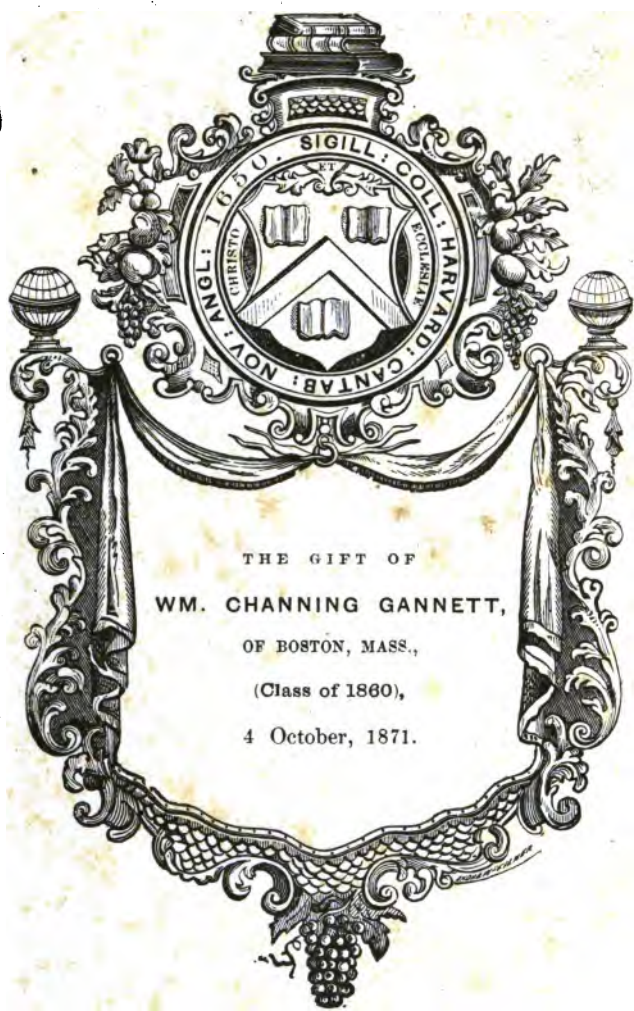
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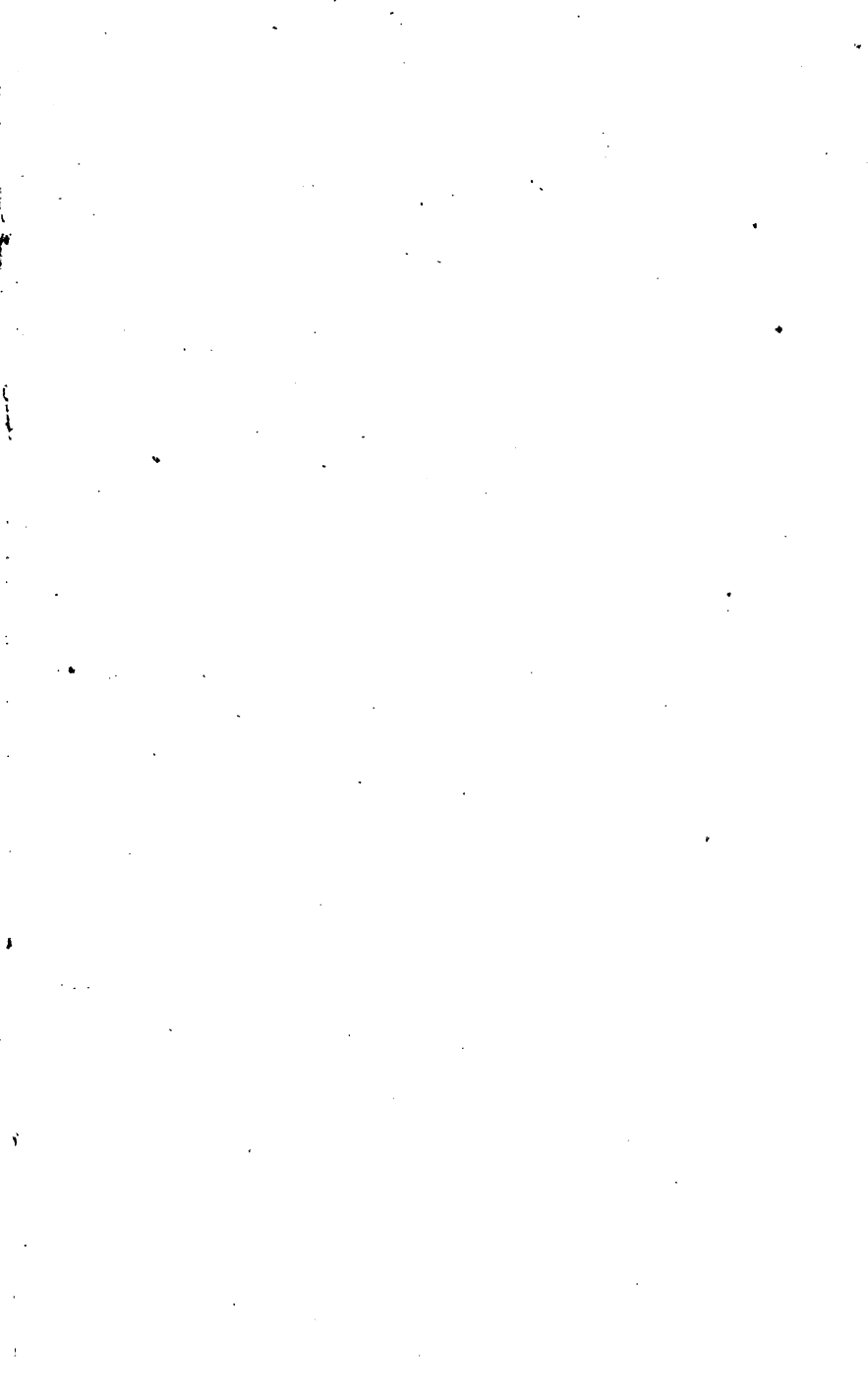
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THE
LAST THOUGHTS
OF
A NAVAL OFFICER,
ON THE UNLAWFULNESS OF WAR, &c.,
IN A LETTER TO HIS LATE MAJESTY,
GEORGE THE FOURTH;
AND A SERIES OF LETTERS TO HIS GRACE
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

BY THOMAS THRUSH,
AUTHOR OF "THE APOLOGY OF AN OFFICER FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE
PROFESSION OF ARMS."

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."—Matt. v. 38, 39.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

From the conviction that war—war defensive as well as offensive,—is directly opposed to the will of the Great Ruler of the Universe, as revealed in the Gospel of Peace, the author deemed it his sacred duty, after the most diligent and painful inquiry, to resign the commission, and half-pay, which he had for many years held as a Captain in the Naval Service of his country; and publicly to assign his reasons for a proceeding so novel, and extraordinary. This he did in a Letter to his reigning Sovereign, George the Fourth, which Letter he published early in the year 1825.

In order to show that this Letter was in strict accordance with Scripture, the author subsequently published **THE APOLOGY OF AN OFFICER FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROFESSION OF ARMS**, containing, with the above Letter, a series of letters on the Unlawfulness of War, and the Military Profession.

Sixteen years having elapsed since the publication of the First Letter, and neither it, nor his **APOLOGY**, having attracted much

public attention, the author is desirous of leaving behind him a testimony that his opinions remain unchanged at a very late period of life. This will appear from the Letters addressed to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, as spiritual head of the Church. The author's reasons for taking this liberty will be found in the letters addressed to his Grace.

Being now in his eighty-first year, the author thinks he may, without presumption, give these Letters to the world as his **LAST THOUGHTS**. He implores the blessing of Almighty God on his humble endeavours to fulfil His will; and that HE will, in his good time, open the eyes of men to the atrocities and miseries of war, and its utter inaccordance with the precepts of the Gospel, and the virtue and happiness of mankind.

T. THRUSH.

*Belle Vue, Harrogate,
January 14th, 1841.*

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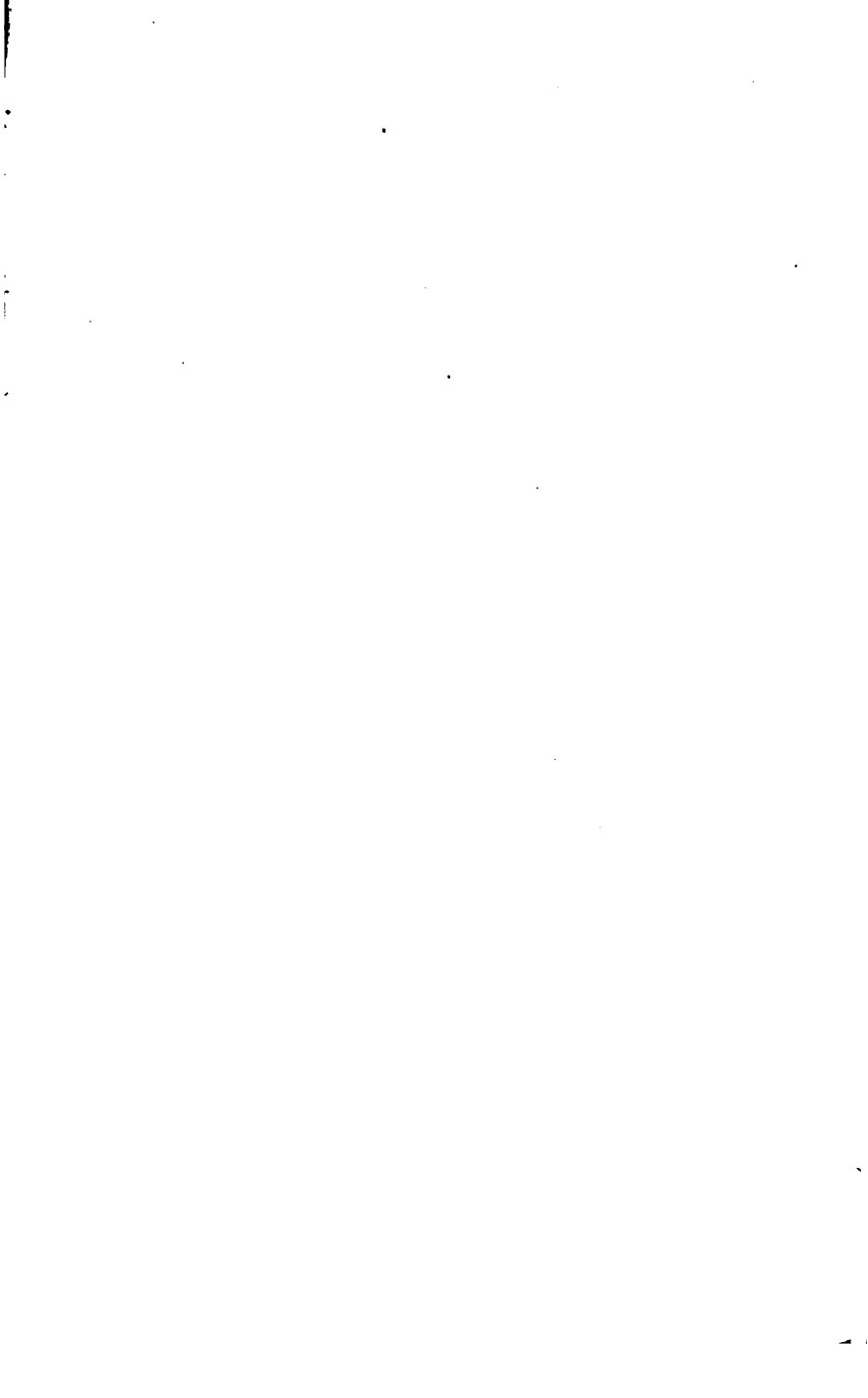
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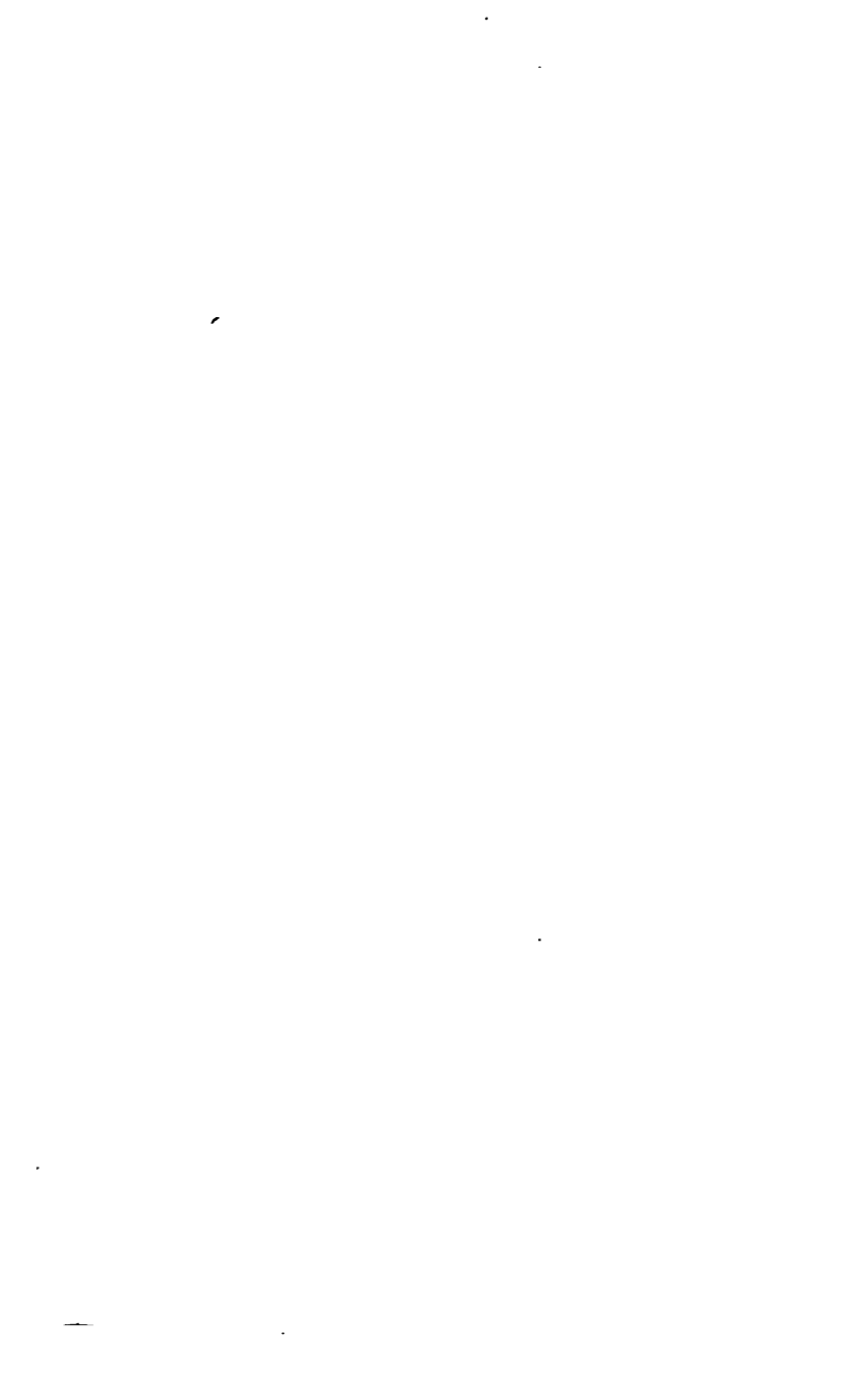
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A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO HIS MAJESTY, GEORGE THE FOURTH, BY
THE AUTHOR, ON RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION AS
A CAPTAIN IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

"I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

SIRE,

WHEN a subject presumes publicly to address his sovereign, on a matter which he deems of the very highest importance to the welfare and happiness of mankind, he cannot, if his motives are pure, help feeling much anxiety to acquit himself in a way that may best promote his views ; that may give no offence to the sovereign he addresses ; and that may, as much as possible, disarm public censure.

This Sire, is my case : and when I inform Your Majesty that the purport of this letter is to announce my resignation of the commission and rank I hold in

Your Majesty's Naval Service, from a conviction that my retaining them is incompatible with my christian profession, it will be obvious that my situation, if not one of great difficulty, is, at least, one of peculiar delicacy. It will be equally obvious, that it is no easy matter for me to avoid giving offence, or even to escape censure.

The difficulties of my situation are increased by the consideration that I have no precedent for my guidance, either as to the letter I am addressing to Your Majesty, or to the important and unusual act to which this letter relates. In both cases I am acting, and I feel the weighty responsibility, solely on my own judgement, and without the aid of precedent or example. This consideration ought to make me both humble and circumspect ; that I may neither do nor say any thing of which I may hereafter see just cause to repent. I trust, Sire, this will not be my case ; for on the subject of these pages I have not thought lightly or casually, but seriously and intensely ; and this not merely during a week, a month, or even a year, but almost daily for the last three years. After endeavouring to gain the best information on a subject continually becoming more interesting to me ; and after imploring the guidance of that Being who alone can direct the hearts of men to what is right ; my scruples concerning the accordancy of the military profession with the precepts of the Christian religion have ended in the conviction, that the duties of this profession are altogether irreconcilable with the plain fundamental principles of our holy religion.

Considering the subject-matter of this letter, and the profession of its writer, it might be deemed more respectful to Your Majesty, as well as to the distinguished persons who compose the Board of Admiralty, that I should, according to professional etiquette, address myself to them, through their Secretary. After due consideration, it appears necessary for me, on the present occasion, to depart from this custom. Whether, Sire, I regard Your Majesty as the fountain of military rank and honour, or as the Supreme Head of the Church of Christ in the nation you govern, but more especially as the latter, I feel it to be my duty to address these pages to Your Majesty; and I trust that my boldness, in doing so, will not be considered as a departure from Christian humility, or from the deference and duty justly required from a subject to his sovereign.

When a man, by many years of assiduity and active exertion, has gained a highly respectable rank in his profession; when indeed, he has nearly arrived at the goal of his wishes,—it may be expected that he will thankfully enjoy this rank, and its emoluments. But when, instead of doing so, he, in advanced life, resigns these, he is likely to be taxed with something beyond mere imbecility,—the remark of Festus to St. Paul will scarcely be thought too severe for a person acting thus at variance with common feelings and practice. As this remark may possibly be applied to me; I hope, though I have no pretensions to the learning of the Apostle, that I may be permitted to answer in his words, that “I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

To account for a conduct so perfectly strange and unusual, is a duty I owe to Your Majesty : but before I proceed to discharge this duty, it may be proper to examine how far I may lawfully, under any circumstances, withdraw myself from my profession.

In whatever light I regard my half-pay, I am duly sensible that my engagement to Your Majesty and my country is one of a very sacred nature, and that I ought to be able to adduce weighty and satisfactory reasons for the step I am taking. I cannot be ignorant that such a line of conduct, if generally adopted, would produce very important consequences to society in all nations: I therefore feel it, not only an imperative duty to Your Majesty, to my brother-officers, and to the world at large, but also a most sacred duty to my Maker, that I should, with the greatest plainness, state my reasons, or rather my apology, for a proceeding which, as far as I know, is in modern times unprecedented. In doing this, it will be my most anxious wish and endeavour to observe the deference and profound respect justly due to Your Majesty's person, and to the elevated and important station you fill. Should I fail in doing this, I entreat you, Sire, to believe that my failure does not arise from a wish to withhold from Your Majesty the honour justly due to you ; but from an overpowering anxiety to "render unto God the things that are God's."

Although, Sire, I feel the fullest conviction that the case I am going, hypothetically, to state, could not under any circumstances happen to me ; yet permit me to suppose, though living under your protection, that

I should so far forget my obligations and my allegiance to Your Majesty as to unite myself to your enemies. Were I, by any possibility, implicated in a transaction so truly degrading, I should consider it as my first duty, as soon as I became sensible of the enormity of my crime, to make the most ample and the most public reparation for it. Though my doing so might subject me to the charge of cowardice and treachery ; yet unquestionably, it would be my bounden duty to retrace my steps and return to my allegiance to you, my lawful sovereign ; and it would be equally my duty to do this in the most public manner.

In some points my own real situation appears to me very similar to the imaginary case I have here stated. With much zeal and sincerity I entered into the Naval Service of Your Majesty's revered Father, and swore allegiance to him. This allegiance is now, of course, due to Your Majesty, as his lawful successor. When I entered into this solemn contract, I entertained no apprehension that I was acting in opposition to the principles of the Christian religion ; nor did any apprehension of this kind ever arise in my mind during the time I was actively employed in the service of my country. Nay, so far from suspecting that I was departing from Christian rectitude, it appeared to me almost certain, if I should lose my life in the service of my king and my country, that this would serve as a kind of passport to the favour and acceptance of God. This opinion, which has been frequently inculcated by ministers of the Gospel of Peace, as well as by pagan writers, is, I believe, generally entertained by those

who think at all when they enter the naval or military profession.

Those, Sire, who live much in the world are imperceptibly led to think, and act, upon the principles of those with whom they associate. Though, in the busy scenes of naval service, I never entertained an idea of my profession being irreconcilable with the religion of Christ; yet, after passing several years in a retirement bordering on seclusion; and after more closely inspecting the Christian precepts, and reviewing my past life, it appears to me that while I have been serving my king and my country, if not brilliantly, yet faithfully, I have been acting in open disobedience to the plain and positive commands of another and a superior Master,—a Master whose claims upon my allegiance are prior, and paramount, to those of Your Majesty, or of any earthly sovereign.

Christianity being considered as a part of the laws of the land, it would seem reasonable to conclude, that so long as a subject obeys the precepts of the divine Founder of this religion, he can hardly fail in any important duty to his sovereign. In other words, if a subject is careful to “render unto God, the things that are God’s,” it will be hardly possible for him to withhold from his sovereign those things that are lawfully due to him. In Christianity, one duty implies the other; and thus the duty to the Prince is placed upon the most solid foundation, as forming an essential part of a Christian’s duty to God. But Sire, permit me with great deference and respect to observe, that the claims of any earthly sovereign, parent, or benefactor, to

our gratitude, our love, and our obedience, ought not for a moment to be put in competition with those of our Maker. And it is, Sire, not only our bounden duty, but also our highest interest, to render unconditional and absolute obedience to God alone.

During the latter part of those years of retirement which I have mentioned, this and other Christian truths have become strongly impressed on my mind; and conscience has told me, that, however honourable my profession may be considered, it is impossible for a man to be at the same time a faithful follower of Christ and a warrior by profession. The moment a man sells himself to his sovereign, or to his country, for the purpose of human destruction, he loses *caste* (if I may be allowed the expression) as a Christian. He forfeits that liberty, that freedom to think, to speak, and to act, on moral and religious principles, which as a Christian, it is his privilege, as well as his duty, to maintain.

If a subject may be permitted to make the remark, Your Majesty appears to entertain opinions similar to these. In confirming the sentence of a Court Martial held on a foreign station on two officers for disobedience of orders, Your Majesty most justly observes, "IF RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES WERE ALLOWED TO BE URGED BY INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS AS A PLEA FOR DISOBEDIENCE OF ORDERS, THE DISCIPLINE OF THE ARMY WOULD SUSTAIN AN INJURY WHICH MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO THE STATE,"* Surely, Sire, this is equivalent to saying

* One of our greatest heroes, who has also distinguished himself as a legislator, appears to have entertained sentiments exactly similar to those of His Majesty George the Fourth. Alluding to the conduct of Sir Peregrine Maitland, on resigning his commission in India, the Duke of Wellington, in

that men who are imbued with RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES, OR Christians, are unfit for the military service.

Of the justice of Your Majesty's remark, or of the equity of the sentence of the Court, no one conversant in military discipline can entertain a doubt. Thinking men, who believe that their professional duty interferes with their duty to God, ought not to halt between two opinions.

Since I have been led to the examination of the foregoing opinions, my convictions from reflection and from reading, especially from reading the Holy Scriptures, have become established. Indeed there is scarcely a chapter in the New Testament that does not virtually condemn war,—scarcely a command, or a precept, to which a professed warrior can pay unconditional obedience. I therefore, Sire, as a Christian, looking forward to existence beyond the grave, feel myself compelled to resign, and lay at your Majesty's feet, that commission in your Naval Service, which I laboured with diligence and fidelity to attain; and on which, when attained, no one placed a higher value than myself. I see no alternative, Sire, between doing this and relinquishing those glorious hopes of immortality which our Saviour holds out to those, and to those only, who obey his precepts.

In camps and fleets, and in the busy scenes of public

his place in the House of Peers, is reported to have said, "THAT HE (Sir Peregrine Maitland,) DID RIGHT, AND THAT MEN WHO HAD NICE NOTIONS ABOUT RELIGION HAVE NO BUSINESS TO BE SOLDIERS." No one can doubt that his Grace possesses that physical courage which is the life-blood of the military hero; but, I think we may with some propriety ask, Does his Grace possess that moral courage which forms the life and soul of a Christian. May not both he and Earl Winchelsea, and a host of other legislators be taxed with the want of this courage; and may not persons of inferior rank ask, Are our law-makers Christians?

This note forms no part of former editions of this Letter.

life, the awful threats and the cheering hopes of the Gospel do not receive the serious consideration they deserve. Withdrawn from those scenes, my mind has become more and more impressed with the clearest conviction, that for men to devote themselves to the military profession, and to assemble by thousands for the avowed purpose of deliberately shedding human blood, is as clearly contrary to the plain and positive precepts of Jesus, as it is abhorrent to those natural feelings of humanity that, till blunted or perverted by education, are in mercy impressed on our hearts by our wise and benevolent Creator. Entertaining these opinions ; believing that they will be approved by my future judge ; and, as a Christian, determined never to draw a sword, or pull a trigger, for the purpose of shedding human blood ; nor yet to return a blow for a blow, or an insult for an insult ; I feel myself perfectly unfit for Your Majesty's Naval Service, and I think I should not act either honestly or consistently, in retaining my commission.

I am aware, Sire, that the step I have taken might, in times less liberal and enlightened, have subjected me to severe pains and penalties. I am thankful that I live in times when the Christian religion is not only better understood, but when it is considered as forming an essential part of the laws of the most powerful and civilized nations ; and I feel much confidence that Your Majesty, though you may condemn the step I have taken, will approve the motive by which it has been dictated. Were the subjects of Your Majesty, and of other sovereigns, to act generally on the principle I

have adopted, though some local and temporary inconvenience might be the result, extensive and permanent good must be the consummation: nor is it probable that universal peace will ever be established on any other basis than unconditional obedience to the precepts of Jesus.

Suppose, Sire, that instead of Your Majesty's subjects adopting this pacific system, the French, whom, alas! contrary to the fundamental principles of our religion, we have been trained to regard as our natural enemies,—suppose, Sire, that they should set the glorious example to the world, and “beat their swords into plough-shares:” would Your Majesty, or would your subjects, or would other nations, regard this as a misfortune? Instead of thus considering it, would it not be hailed by all as a most auspicious event? And, instead of thereby subjecting themselves to insult, would they not command the admiration, the esteem, and the friendship, of every civilised, and even of every savage nation? May it henceforth, Sire, be the ambition of Britain and France, to set to other nations the glorious example of cultivating a Christian instead of a martial spirit.

In withdrawing myself from Your Majesty's Naval Service, I have the consolation of doing it in a time of profound peace, when the least possible objection can be made to such a measure. It is also less repugnant to my feelings to retire from half-pay than from actual service. This pay, I have been led to believe, is not only considered as a reward for past services, but also as a retaining fee for future exertions. Being un-

willing to comply with the terms, I feel that I am not entitled to the fee; and that I ought not to receive it. Did I, on the other hand, regard my half-pay as exclusively a reward for past services; having earned it by what I now consider as a transgression of Christian duty, or as a desertion of my allegiance to God, it appears to me, in receiving it, that I virtually renew, or continue, my disobedience. If I may be allowed to apply to myself the figurative and emphatical language of St. Paul, "I crucify afresh the Lord Jesus Christ," (THE PRINCE OF PEACE,) "and put him and his religion to an open shame."

To enumerate only a few of the evils emanating from war would swell this letter far beyond the limits to which it is my wish to confine it. Of war it may safely be affirmed that, if it does not cause, it aggravates every evil, moral or political, by which mankind is assailed. In the Old Testament, war, or the sword, is uniformly spoken of as the instrument whereby God punishes rebellious and idolatrous nations. This ought to be regarded as a warning voice from Heaven, both to nations and individuals, not to engage in it.

I might here, Sire, lay down my pen, trusting that in a situation of considerable difficulty I have acted (at least according to the best of my judgment) on correct Christian principles. It seems necessary however, upon an occasion like the present, that I should endeavour to prove that I have acted on these principles.

The prophecies of the Old Testament, when taken in connexion with the precepts of the Gospel, appear decisive against the practice of war, under the Christian

dispensation. To this evidence I appeal with the more satisfaction, as it affords, at the same time, the pleasing and sure testimony, that the degrading and sanguinary scenes of past and present times are not to endure, but, on the contrary, that they will be succeeded by ages of permanent peace and happiness.

I am not, Sire, so great a visionary as to expect that the example of any individual, much less of one so little known to the world as myself, will have the least influence with others; yet I confidently anticipate that a time will arrive, when not only insulated individuals, but when men in great numbers,—when *the nations*,—when *many people* * will act on the same principles that I have done. I do not entertain this belief, merely because I think the divine precepts of the Christian religion are admirably calculated to produce so glorious an event, or because the “signs of the times” lead reflecting persons to expect it; but chiefly because I am a believer in those prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of this devoutly to be wished for event as a certainty. These prophecies give evidence concerning this triumph of Christianity, with as much precision and clearness as they testify the truth of Christianity itself. Their accomplishment, indeed, seems to form a necessary connecting link in the grand chain of the prophecies concerning Christianity: this link wanting, the fortress of Christian truth is rendered assailable and is exposed to the attacks of Jews and sceptics, who taunt Christians with the remark that their religion cannot be true, inasmuch as the PRINCE OF PEACE

* Isaiah ii. 4.

is not yet come into the world. As it was, Sire, the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles to appeal to the prophecies of the Old Testament, it seems wise that Christians of the present day, in examining a disputed point, such as the lawfulness of war, should follow the example of these infallible guides.

However acute and excellent the writings of many learned commentators on the Prophecies, and however decisive the proofs they draw from them of the truth of the Christian revelation, it would seem certain that some of the most important of these prophecies, generally applied to Christianity, are at variance with all history, whether civil or ecclesiastical, of the last fourteen or fifteen centuries. The following prophecies are of this description :

I. Isaiah ii. 2. *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountain and shall be exalted above the hills, and all the nations shall flow unto it.*

3. *And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

4. *And he will judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people : and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.—See also Micah iv. 1-4.*

II. Isaiah xi. 1. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.*

5. *Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.*

6. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them.*

7. *And the cow and the bear shall feed : and their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

8. *And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.*

9. *They shall not hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

These prophecies, though couched in language so very dissimilar, are no doubt descriptive of the same event, viz., the great happiness destined for mankind through the medium of the Christian religion. This happiness many of the virtuous, the enlightened, and the philanthropic, in all ages since the Christian era, have ardently, but vainly, wished to see realised. The former prophecy describes this triumph of Christianity in terms so plain and literal, that they cannot be misunderstood. The latter, though couched in symbolical language, is also descriptive of a state of great happiness under the Christian dispensation. In two important particulars these prophecies remain yet to be fulfilled, viz. : in establishing peace in the world ; and in spread-

ing *that knowledge of the Lord* which is finally to produce this blessed effect.

Should it be asked, Sire, of what use these prophecies are to Christians of the present day,—are they recorded merely to gratify a prying curiosity, and to convey to them information concerning events which are to take place at some future and indefinite period, and in which they have no interest or concern? This question is answered by St. Paul; that prophecy (like other parts of Scripture) is “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” These prophecies, therefore, are handed down to inform us that it is the will of the great and benevolent Parent of mankind, and consequently the duty of Christians, to live together in harmony and love, instead of hating and destroying each other by war.—They are written to show us that if wars now exist, the fault is not in Christianity, but in those who are called Christians.—They are written to tell us what effects real Christianity *will* produce hereafter, and consequently what it ought to produce now.—They are written, Sire, to admonish Christians to refrain from war. These prophecies are still more important, for they point out the way to put an end to war; viz. by spreading abroad Christianity (or “the knowledge of the Lord”) till “it shall cover the earth.” When Christians cease from war, this undertaking will become comparatively an easy task. Thus understood and applied, these prophecies, instead of being a mere dead letter and a matter of useless speculation, become practically and individually useful; they become, like other parts of Scripture, “profitable for doctrine, for re-

proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

It is well, Sire, for Christians who feel a deep interest for the honour of their religion, that the history of the first two centuries establishes the fact that the professors of Christianity, in those early ages, refrained from war. It is also well for the cause of Christianity that an apostacy from the faith was predicted. In Scripture language, faith and Christian practice are often synonymous; and it is impossible to conceive a greater departure from Christian practice than war. Thus, Sire, this departure from the practice of the Apostles and early Christians, like every other fact connected with the Christian history, when duly considered, bears testimony to its truth.

So long as nations professing Christianity, shall make a trade of war, the superstructure of Christianity must and will be assailable through these prophecies: but its foundations are imperishable. When Christians shall cease from war, which, on the sure word of prophecy, they will do; then may we hope that Christianity "will cover the earth," and that "all kingdoms of this world *will* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Till then, warriors must be considered as the foes of Christianity.

If, Sire, we ask ourselves the question—what changes would be effected in the moral and political world, if our Lord's sermon on the mount, instead of being a subject of occasional eulogium and admiration, were made the standard rule of men's actions? Let the prophet Isaiah answer the question: men would "beat their swords into plough-shares," and "nation would not

lift up sword against nation, neither would they learn war any more." The all-powerful cause that is to produce these glorious effects is Christianity. Connecting it with the prophecies of the Old Testament, we may consider "the knowledge of the Lord," and Christian knowledge, as the same thing ; and taking the sermon of our Lord on the mount as a summary of this knowledge, we may consider it as the noble instrument that is finally to produce these glorious effects.

The close agreement, Sire, between these prophecies and the probable result of our Saviour's precepts, if practically embraced, affords a strong presumptive proof, that both the prophecies and the precepts are of divine origin. I have, I trust, shown that the former never can be fulfilled so long as Christians shall engage in war. It will be equally easy to show that the precepts of the Gospel can never be complied with by nations or by individuals engaging in war. Their obedience to such precepts and commands as the following seems to be an impossibility.

Have peace one with another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love.

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another ; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.

Be at peace among yourselves. See that none render evil for evil to any man. God hath called us to peace.

Follow after love, patience, meekness. Be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. Live in peace.

Lay aside all malice. Put off anger, wrath, malice. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

Avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Overcome evil with good.

What a strange anomaly, Sire, would be exhibited, were these truly noble and characteristic precepts of the Christian religion placed at the head of every naval or military officer's commission, and at the head of every warlike order issued from the Admiralty or War-office, or at the head of every regimental orderly-book! No incongruity could appear greater than such a mixture of war and Gospel—no impossibility more evident than the impossibility of obedience in both cases—no truth more clear than that war and Christianity are utterly irreconcilable. When the Christian and military duties are thus contrasted, the discrepancy is so glaring, that it has rather the appearance of burlesque than of sober truth. But surely this striking contrariety affords no mean argument that the duties of a Christian and a warrior can never be faithfully discharged by the same individual.

A due consideration of these truly Christian precepts will show us the fallacy of one of the most popular arguments in favour of war: viz., that as the Jews, the highly-favoured people of God, were commanded, by God himself, to wage war, it cannot there-

fore be sinful for Christians to do the same. But our Saviour has left his followers without this excuse ; for he tells them they are not to be guided by the customs of the Jews: "Ye have heard," says he, "that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : but I say unto you, love them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." The practice of the Jews, therefore, Sire, can be no excuse for Christians to engage in war.

Another popular argument in favour of war is, that the moral precepts of the Gospel, though imperative to individuals, may, in cases of necessity, be dispensed with by sovereigns, or nations. On this subject an acute reasoner thus expresses himself : "In the transactions of private persons, no advantage that results from the breach of a general law of justice, can compensate to the public for the violation of the law ; *in the concerns of empire this may sometimes be doubted.*" I deeply regret, Sire, that a sentiment so derogatory to Christian morals should have proceeded from the pen of Dr. Paley. My regret, however, is softened by the knowledge that Christian sovereigns united in Holy Alliance "have not so learned Christ." These sovereigns solemnly declare "*their fixed resolution, both in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other government, to take for their SOLE guide the precepts of that*

holy religion" (the Christian): "*namely, the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace, which, far from being applicable only to private concerns, must have an immediate influence on the counsels of princes, and guide all their steps, as being the ONLY means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections.*" Whenever Christian nations shall act on these principles, wars among them will cease, and "the knowledge of the LORD will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Considering the high importance of the subject-matter of these pages to myself individually, I trust, Sire, that I shall not, in concluding them be accused of egotism, or of improperly indulging my own feelings or vanity, in stating the following particulars concerning myself.

When the first impressions, Sire, were formed in my mind concerning the unlawfulness of Christians entering into or remaining in the military profession, I cannot exactly recollect. To my shame, I may, I believe, say that I never thought seriously on the subject till within the last four years. Whenever I heard feelings of disapprobation expressed concerning war, I was led to regard them, as Bishop Horsley did, as a species of puritanical cant; so fully was I satisfied that war, and consequently my profession, was perfectly consonant with the precepts of Christianity. About the time I have mentioned, owing to circumstances which I need not state, I began to entertain doubts on this subject. These doubts gradually gained strength; and early in the year 1822 I came to the resolution to

investigate the subject more closely than I had hitherto done ; and if, after such investigation, it should appear to me that my profession was irreconcilable with the precepts of Christ, I determined to resign my naval rank and half-pay, although I placed a high value upon the former, and the latter forms a large portion of a very limited income ; and I was thereby subjecting myself, and not myself alone, to a very considerable change in my mode of living, and this at an advanced period of life, when its comforts and conveniences are most wanted.

To take a step so highly important to me in many points of view, but particularly in a religious one, upon the first impression of my mind, would have been highly improper ; for even the best informed persons frequently change their opinions, and see the same transaction in different points of view at different periods of time. From the very novel nature of the act I contemplated, I thought it possible that this might happen to myself ; and that, in my ardour to do what I deemed an act of religious duty, I might hastily take a step of which I might hereafter see just cause to repent, and when repentance could not avail me. I was also aware, that what I proposed doing, being so much at variance with established custom, might be attributed to vanity, or an affectation of singularity—motives by which, as far as I know myself, I have never been greatly influenced. Added to these considerations I felt much difficulty as to the manner in which I should withdraw myself from my profession. It appeared to me, (though it may savour of vanity thus

to express myself,) that the measure I contemplated was one of very great importance both in a political and religious point of view.

Under these perplexing circumstances, I came to the resolution to retain my half-pay three years longer, should my life be so long spared, and to dedicate that time to serious inquiry on a subject constantly pressing upon my mind. This delay I considered as likely to cure me of any false notions that either ignorance, fanaticism, or vanity might generate. It has, Sire, pleased the divine Disposer of events to grant me these years ; and I hope they have not been passed unprofitably. After every inquiry and consideration on one of the most important subjects that can occupy the human mind, as far as my abilities, and opportunities have enabled me, and after frequent and earnest prayer to that Being who alone has power over the minds of men, that I might do nothing dishonourable to Christianity nor injurious to society, I have seen no reason to regret the resolution I then formed. Some may blame me, and with seeming justice, for taking so long a time for consideration, on what I now speak of as so very clear a point. I do not however regret this delay, as it has effectually convinced me that I have acted not only from pure motives, but also on correct principles ; and I feel the fullest confidence that I shall never repent of the step that conscience has dictated. This delay has also enabled me to correct the false views I have entertained till within the last twelve months concerning what is called *defensive war*. On this subject I have, indeed, changed my opinions.

When I first formed the resolution of withdrawing from the naval profession, I was, Sire, impressed with an idea, perhaps rather a confused one, that though wars of conquest and aggression were clearly unjustifiable and wicked, yet that wars of defence were not so. For individuals or nations to engage in these, I considered as not merely lawful, but as highly honourable and meritorious. However I may subject myself to scorn and contempt, I now feel no hesitation in declaring my conviction, that warfare of any kind, offensive or defensive, national or individual, is most plainly interdicted by the spirit, if not by the letter, of the Gospel. It is absolutely irreconcilable with the characteristic precepts of Christianity, as well as with the prophecies which I have already quoted. These precepts and prophecies teach us that to obey the will of God is "the whole business of morality." I may be under a delusion; but regarding war of any kind as incompatible with this obedience, I must either reject, as sophisticated, the excuses and apologies of learned and ingenuous men in favour of defensive war, or set at nought both the Gospel and the prophecies.

Politicians consider the being ready for war as the surest mean of avoiding it, and as a proof of true wisdom. This is mere assertion: and history and experience admonish us, that if one nation arms by way of precaution and self-defence, another and another will do the same: and these defensive armaments, it is more than probable, will produce offensive operations. Defensive armaments may secure temporary safety, but they are calculated to create jealousy and provoke

hostility, and to verify the remark of him who "spake as never man spake;" viz., that "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." We are told on the sure testimony of prophecy that wars will cease; but we have not the slightest intimation that this will be effected by defensive armaments: on the contrary, we have abundant reason to believe that the spread of Christianity (or "the knowledge of the Lord,") will produce this. (*Isaiah* xi. 9.)

A meek and an unresisting spirit seems to be the key-stone of Christianity: it appears to be regarded by our Saviour as a kind of celestial panoply, not merely securing to its possessor the approbation of God, but also protecting him from wrong and insult. The same remark may be applied to families, and also to nations. Its effects with these latter, it is true, remain to be fully tried; but in I believe, the only instance in which this spirit has been put in practice upon an extended scale, it succeeded. It will succeed with Christian nations, unless Christianity and civilisation render men more ungovernable and unprincipled than the untutored Indians with whom William Penn had to deal: these were completely won and subdued by this defensive and truly Christian armour; and, when its use shall be better understood, Christian nations will cease to learn war; and there will be "nothing to hurt or destroy."

Some, Sire, may cavil with my having, on the present occasion, appealed so confidently to prophecy. It has, indeed, been too much the custom with several commentators, even with men of considerable eminence

as writers and scholars, to identify the awful and wonderful events that have been passing in our own days, with some of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, which admit of a variety of interpretation. The prophecies to which I have appealed are of a very different description, and can hardly be misapplied or misunderstood. These prophecies place our holy religion in the most dignified and delightful point of view, as the path to universal peace and philanthropy. The Author of our divine religion is also by these prophecies placed in the most lovely and captivating point of view, as peculiarly entitled to our veneration, our gratitude, our obedience, and our love. This application of prophecy adds strength to the Christian evidences, and repels one of the most powerful arguments of sceptics against the religion of Christ.

I trust, Sire, that the state of *gross darkness**, which has for so many centuries been producing war and destruction, is fast passing away, and light approaching with a steady step; and that, without improperly indulging the imagination, we may consider the present times as those described by the prophet as *neither day nor night*, previous to the *evening time* (of Christianity,) when it shall be *light* †. We are accustomed to regard the times in which we live with a partial and complacent eye; and, comparing them with those that are past, to exult in our superiority over our predecessors. We have, indeed, much cause for gratitude for many national blessings; but as Christians, none for exultation, when we call to mind the torrents of human

* Isaiah lx. 2.

† Zachariah xiv. 6, 7.

blood that have been shed in our own times, in direct opposition to the precepts of Jesus.

When Christians, Sire, shall subdue the anti-christian spirit of ambition, of resistance, and revenge,—or, in the words of St. James, those *lusts* from whence wars arise,—and, instead of emulating the heroes of antiquity, to which the present course of education propels them, they shall take Jesus Christ for their pattern:—when, like him, men shall think it more honourable to submit with patience to a blow, than to return it with interest:—when men shall prefer the approbation of God, to the admiration of their fellow-men; or, in a word, when they become Christians:—then “will they beat their swords into plough-shares;” and “nation will not rise up against nation, neither will they learn war any more.” This, Sire, is the language of prophecy; and in the application of it, and of the precepts of Jesus, I trust that “*I have spoken forth the words of truth and soberness.*”

I think it incumbent upon me, Sire, before I conclude this letter, to assure Your Majesty that, in retiring from your Naval Service, I am solely actuated by those motives which I have set forth; and that I have not been led to take this step by any men or body of men. To one friend only has my intention been known from the first; and I have the happiness to know that this friend, (who will be a fellow-sufferer from the act,) most cordially approves what I have done. Nor, Sire, have I, till very near the time of sending these pages to the press, read any of the valuable publications of Peace Societies in this and other

countries. The recent perusal of some of their works has afforded me the most heart-felt satisfaction, together with the pleasure of knowing that though these pages may excite feelings of pity and contempt in many, yet that they are in accordance with the opinions of numbers of pious Christians of distinguished rank and literary attainments in different parts of the world. Believing, Sire, that the publications of the Peace Societies have not only a tendency to annihilate war, but also to promote religion, and with it obedience to sovereigns, I sincerely wish they may be more extensively read than they have hitherto been.

May it, Sire, please the Supreme Disposer of events to grant that Your Majesty's reign may be prolonged, and that it may continue to be peaceable, prosperous, and happy; and may it accord with the wisdom and benevolence of His divine government of the world, shortly to put an end to all war and bloodshed, and incline the hearts of men to deeds of mercy and philanthropy: and may Your Majesty, and the highly-favoured nation you govern, be made the glorious instruments of spreading through the world pure and unadulterated Christianity, or that "*knowledge of the Lord*" which can alone produce and secure the peace and civilization of the world.

Thus highly honoured, Britain may indulge in the hope that not only her existence as a nation, but also her tranquility will endure; and that she will not be consigned by the great Ruler of the universe, to the lot uniformly recorded in history of other great and warlike nations, who, having been raised

by the sword, have also perished by the sword.

Though, Sire, I have for the reasons I have stated, withdrawn myself from Your Majesty's Naval Service, it will ever be my most earnest wish, as it will also be my constant endeavour, as a Christian and as a subject, to approve myself, with unfeigned deference and respect,

Sire,

Your Majesty's most faithful,

Most dutiful, and devoted Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

Sutton, near Thirsk,
14th Jan. 1825.

LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO HIS GRACE, THE MOST REVEREND, THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

LETTER I.

MOST REVEREND SIR,

In the very peculiar situation in which the preceding letter placed me, as a kind of alien or outcast from the military profession ; and being regarded by many whom I respected and esteemed as a visionary and enthusiast, rather than a person of sound mind, I deemed it my duty, as far as I was able, by further discussion, to show that this letter was not the production of a visionary ; that it was in strict accordance with Scripture and common sense, and was written with calmness, and after much and deliberate consideration. With this view I subsequently published THE APOLOGY OF AN OFFICER FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROFESSION OF ARMS, in a series of letters on the causes and

evils of war, its unlawfulness, &c., &c.; in order to show that war is as unwise as it is sinful; that it is as much opposed to the interests of mankind, as to the revealed will of God. With the same views I now have the honour of addressing the following Letters to your Grace. Along with them it seemed necessary that I should submit to your inspection the preceding Letter to my reigning sovereign as forming a principal part of my defence.

I was, my Lord, led to imagine, or rather to hope, from the very singular fact recorded in that Letter, that some of the Ministers of the Church of which your Grace is the distinguished spiritual head would have come forth to exhibit the fallacies that might possibly be contained in it, but sixteen years have elapsed, and it remains nearly unnoticed. I am thus, my Lord, led to conclude, (a conclusion, which may perhaps be considered as savouring of vanity or presumption)—that what I have written is scripturally and literally true; and, therefore, that it cannot be answered.

In this state of mind, and far advanced in life, advanced indeed, by the mercy of God, beyond the common boundary allotted to man—I am desirous, before I am called to my last solemn account, to leave behind me, in my present Letters, an abridged statement of my Apology, also my Letter to my reigning sovereign, in the hope that they may obtain a more extended circulation, and show the opinions of the writer at a much later period of life. This, my Lord, is my Apology, if apology be deemed necessary, for writin these Let-

ters, and for addressing them to your Grace. To whom indeed could I address them with so just a hope of being read by the clergy in general? To whom, could I with equal propriety address Letters relating to the peace and happiness of mankind, as your Grace, the spiritual head of the established Church; and the representative, if I may so express myself, of the PRINCE OF PEACE, a high and holy title!

The following Letters are intended to show that all war is inaccordant with religion, whether natural or revealed; expedience, the bane of every thing truly noble and good, I leave out of the question, taking Scripture and common sense for my guides: they are alike the gift of an all-wise, and all-merciful God; and cannot, when rightly understood, contradict each other. Can any thing, I would respectfully ask your Grace, be more repugnant to reason and revelation than that three or four hundred thousand men on each side should be opposed to each other for the horrible, the express purpose of calm and deliberate murder? Yet, my Lord, this has been the case in our own times without any warning voice of Pope, or Prelate, or Priest to proclaim its atrocity. Can any thing be more lamentable than that millions of brothers, children of the same gracious parent, rational beings, heirs of eternity, and baptised into the sacred service of the PRINCE OF PEACE, should be maintained by governments professing allegiance to the same sacred person, for the express horrid purpose of human destruction? Is it not lamentable that whilst these latter are carefully clothed and fed, the industrious poor, who largely contribute to support

them, are by millions brought to a premature grave for want of the absolute necessities of life? How do these things come to pass among nations called Christians? among rational beings instructed in the benign religion of Jesus?

Dr. Paley has justly observed that "no two things can be more contrary than the heroic and the Christian character:" and, speaking of the former, he observes, "that it is and ever has been, the favourite of the world. It is the character of great men. There is a dignity in it which commands respect. The latter is poor spirited, tame, and abject: yet so it hath happened, that with the founder of Christianity, this latter is the subject of his commendation, his precepts, his example, and the former is so in no part of its composition."*

With equal truth Dr. Paley might have said that no two things could be more contrary than the pliant and selfish policy by which nations and individuals are generally governed, and the firm, noble, and disinterested conduct which is founded on implicit obedience to the precepts of Christ. It may be added that the former is, and ever has been preferred by the world; it is the general character of the great, and it recommends to their notice persons in the inferior ranks of life. There is in it a suavity of manners, a ready acquiescence in the opinions of those with whom we associate, calculated to conciliate their regard and affection. It is the step-ladder to wealth, to honour, and every thing the world can give. The latter promises

* See Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* Chap. II. on the morality of the Gospel.

little for this world but much for the next. The remarks of Dr. Paley appear to afford a satisfactory answer to the question I have asked concerning the belligerent state of the world, and to show that the evils with which it is afflicted arise from the palpable neglect of those duties our religion so plainly inculcates. That Dr. Paley, entertaining these just sentiments concerning Christianity, and concerning war, should be the defender of warriors, seems difficult to account for, equally so that he should have subscribed the thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church.

The evils arising out of this departure from the requirements of a religion by which men profess to be guided, are written in characters of blood in the histories of nations called Christian, during the last fifteen centuries. When these things, my Lord, are considered ; when we take into the account that the great end of Christ's mission, as announced by angels, was to establish "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men," it might naturally have been expected that the desired end would long ago have been accomplished ; or else that men, tired out with expectation, would ere now have abandoned a religion, which, according to prophecy, promises so much ; but, as far as peace and security are concerned, has accomplished so little. Princes, legislators, and priests have trusted Omnipotence with the management of the thunder, the wind, and the rain ; but, in directing the moral and physical energies of mankind, they appear to prefer their own puny conceits to the revealed will and wisdom of a merciful and benevolent Creator.

Living, as we do, in an age when almost all subjects, especially those connected with religion and politics, have been subjected to investigation more than at any preceding period ; and taking into the account that the world has existed, with occasional intermissions, in a state of war and bloodshed during a long succession of ages, it might reasonably be expected in the present enlightened age, as this is generally called, that few men of education, few men professing the Christian faith, would be found who had not inquired at the fountain head, whether the religion of Christ, whose followers they profess themselves to be, does, or does not sanction war ; or whether it permits its votaries to dedicate themselves to what is called the profession of arms, and to make it a trade to live by.

However revolting and foreign to the mild spirit of Christianity it may be for the professors of this benign religion to gain their daily bread by slaughtering their brethren, it is certain that there are few, either parents who establish their sons in this profession, or sons who voluntarily engage in it, who have examined the sacred records of their religion for the specific purpose of informing themselves whether the profession of arms is reconcilable with the profession of Christianity ; few who have dreamt of its being sinful. Nay, my Lord, though no question can be more closely connected with the well-being of society, it may, perhaps, be asserted that there are few, even princes and statesmen, who possess the power of employing men in human slaughter, that have seriously considered the question. So far from this, supported by public opinion, by the

opinions of men deemed wise, learned, and honest, and by the authority of antiquity, men of rank, of learning, and even of acknowledged piety and humanity, with very few exceptions, seem to think, that, when sanctioned by a human being as fallible as themselves, they may set aside the laws of God and of humanity, and may not only lawfully, but meritoriously, plunder, and murder each other to the greatest extent. Nay, to such a degree of self-deception have even good men arrived, that they persuade themselves, and others, that they engage in this employment from patriotic and disinterested motives, though men of high rank and fortune are receiving daily wages as in the most servile modes of gaining a livelihood. So long as this wonderful illusion shall remain, men will continue to be corrupt and self-interested, covetous and ambitious, worshippers of mammon, rather than of God; and every plan for ameliorating society, or reforming social institutions, must necessarily prove abortive. If we wish a nation to be virtuous and pacific, individuals must first be made so. A good tree cannot consist of rotten branches. From the laity permit me, my Lord, to ascend to the priesthood, and to express a doubt that few, even of these, prior to admission into holy orders, are called upon to show that, when sanctioned by the magistrate, men may lawfully wear weapons and serve in the wars. If they cannot show that this is to be found in the Scriptures, or that it may be proved thereby, they are guilty of a gross dereliction of duty in subscribing, and ought not to be admitted into holy orders. As to men in general inquiring whether the religion by which

they profess to be governed, imposes upon them any special duties calculated to check the predominating anti-christian spirit inciting to war, or the evils attending it, it may perhaps be affirmed that very few have bestowed a serious thought about these matters. However this may be, it is clear that to give the blessing of peace to the world, was one great end for which Christ lived, and for which he obediently died ; leaving to Christians an example that they should follow his steps.

The letters which I now have the honour to address to your Grace, I have styled my *LAST THOUGHTS* ; as, being so far advanced in life, I trust I may with propriety so designate them. Though writing under circumstances so little encouraging, the employment has afforded me much satisfaction ; the satisfaction of finding all my former opinions strengthened and established ; the satisfaction of believing that I have been faithfully discharging my duty to my Maker, to my Saviour, (the Prince of Peace) and to my fellow-creatures ; and, I would particularly add, to my sovereign, and my country ; for my Lord, I feel the fullest conviction that to endeavour to establish correct Christian principles is the truest patriotism ; and that those principles form the best foundation for the permanent greatness of nations ; the safest pillars for the throne. I feel, my Lord, the fullest conviction that all the difficulties in which princes and statesmen are involved arise from neglecting these sacred principles, and indulging in war—that the miseries and dreadful privations of the poor proceed from the same prolific source of evils, war !

Cheered by the "day-star of prophecy which shineth as in a dark place," I indulge the fervent hope that what I write will be read with approbation when the hand that writes it shall be cold ; when the meek and patient courage of the Christian shall be held in higher honour than the dauntless intrepidity of the hero ; when implicit obedience to Christ the appointed Saviour, guide, and judge of mankind, shall take place of the supple and selfish policy of the world : when men, either from greater intensity of suffering, occasioned by war, or from better understanding the spirit of the religion of Christ, or from a union of these causes shall altogether abandon, and nauseate the profession of arms. Why, my Lord, do men write for posthumous fame ? Is it not because they believe that posterity, like God himself, will judge rightly ?

The present times, as they regard our country, may be considered as critical in the extreme. We are burthened with a debt, incurred by war, greater than the history of the whole world records ; and, instead of possessing the power of discharging it, our wisest statesmen are puzzled to devise the ways and means of paying its interest, or of affording relief to a starving population. In this state, and all the nations of Europe armed, and ready for war, not only Britain, but all these nations, instead of being placed in security, by their imposing military armaments, seem to have increased their danger, and to be placed on the brink of a volcano ready to swallow them up. Thus exposed to danger, surely Christians, Christian princes and legislators, and particularly priests, ought to pause and

ask themselves this solemn question ; “shall the sword devour for ever ?” We have it, my Lord, from the highest authority, and history establishes the fact, that “those who take the sword shall perish by the sword.”

What will be the result of the great military armaments that now cover Europe, no human sagacity can exactly discover. Poverty to a very large portion of those for whom the providence of God has provided ample means of comfort, not to say of blessedness, must be one certain consequence—poverty to those who are the sinews of our national wealth and strength. And, my Lord, is it not possible that those very armies on which princes have for ages relied, may, at no distant period, change, or put down every existing dynasty ? How nearly, my Lord, was our Navy, esteemed our best support, in the year 1797 proving the means of our downfall ?

Not only princes and statesmen, but the clergy, Roman and protestant, have held out to mankind the supreme fallacy that their object in going to war, is to establish true religion, and with it universal and lasting peace. Nothing can be more visionary than to indulge in such an expectation ; and, from this happy epoch we seem, alas ! far removed. But, though the Almighty, in his wise system of governing the world, causes good to arise out of evil ; and though war, from the intensity of suffering it may inflict, should dispose the minds of men to abandon it ; yet, Christianity is an uncompromising religion ; it does not permit the individuals who profess it to do evil that good may come. Its divine Author has plainly declared

that "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." To expect, therefore, that peace will be permanently established by the sword, seems to be about as reasonable as to expect that men, in future ages, will derive health and nourishment, from what now constitutes poison. At a crisis like the present, when light and science are flowing in upon the world, and when the ties by which society has been imperfectly kept together, during ages of darkness, seem to be dissolving, it appears to be the duty of all men, but more especially of the ministers of the Gospel of Peace, to examine the records of that Gospel, and thence to ascertain the lawfulness or unlawfulness of war. To proclaim to the world that the subjects of the Prince of Peace *may lawfully wear weapons and serve in the wars*, appears little less than to paganise Christianity. It deprives it of its most peculiar and characteristic distinction. It denies Christ, inasmuch as it robs Him of his high distinction, as PRINCE OF PEACE.

The great warfare of Christians; the only warfare in which they are not only permitted, but commanded to engage, is the subjugation of those lusts, or *pleasures* (for so the word is translated in the margin of our Bibles,) from whence wars arise. Subdue then the cause of war, and the effect, as a natural consequence will cease. This, my Lord, is Christian warfare; the warfare that will ultimately benefit the whole world. It cannot injure either nations or individuals, and ought to alarm no good man, for it is to be prosecuted by weapons that are "not carnal." Yet, my Lord, however improbable it may appear, these weapons are equal

to the glorious effect they are destined to produce. They are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, (reasonings) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 45.) This warfare, my Lord, will not only subdue war, but warriors. But as Christians, in the earliest ages, degenerated by slow degrees, so may we expect that they will be regenerated in the same progressive manner. The learned writer I have already quoted (Paley) observes that Christianity "can only operate as an alternative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities which folly, or wickedness, or accident have introduced into public establishments." This slow, but sure progress of Christianity, is more aptly described by our Saviour when he says that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." During nearly two centuries this leaven produced a race of men whom no earthly consideration could induce to shed human blood in war; that its operation will again become thus powerful, nay that it will like an *avalanche* become more powerful, every believer in the plain literal prophecies of the Old Testament must regard as certain. This, my Lord, is not mere assertion, for on these very prophecies are founded some of the surest evidences of the truth of the Christian revelation. But in our own country, with the exception of two sects, the Friends

and the Moravians, neither of them numerous, or possessing much influence, Christians like Gallio, appear to "care for none of these things." The little influence of these two sects is probably occasioned by their mixing up many extrinsic doctrines with those of pure Christianity—by mixing, if I may be allowed the expression, much chaff with the pure wheat.

Rather than engage in war, as I shall hereafter have occasion to show, the Christians of the two first centuries, at the expense of their fortunes, their liberties, their lives, bore a noble testimony to its unlawfulness under the Christian dispensation. Shall Christians then, of the present day, who are exempt from the severe trials of the early martyrs; who have, at the most, little to encounter beyond the coldness of old friends, or the sarcasms of injudicious or unfeeling opponents? Shall men bearing the name of Christians, from the mere dread of being pointed at, or the apprehension of being thought singular, shrink from "professing a good profession before many witnesses? Shall men, on such grounds, forfeit the glorious privilege of being called "the children of God?" Will they, from the slavish fear of embracing a very unpopular, and unfashionable doctrine, incur the risk of being disowned by Christ before God.

Before I conclude this my introductory letter to your Grace, permit me to lay before you, and my readers, the solemn appeal—the excellent advice of the learned, the pacific Erasmus, to whose COMPLAINT OF PEACE, a work out of print, I shall frequently refer your Grace, in the following Letters.

“Kings! to you I make my first appeal. On your nod, such is the constitution of human affairs, the happiness of mortals is made to depend. You assume to be the images and representatives of Christ, your sovereign. Then, as you wish men to hear your voice, show the example of obedience, and hear the voice of your Sovereign Lord, commanding you upon your duty, to seek peace and abolish war. Be persuaded that the world, wearied with its long calamities, demands this of you, and has a right to insist on your immediate compliance.

“Priests! to you I appeal as consecrated to the God of love and mercy. On your consciences, I require you to promote, with all the zeal of your hearts, and abilities of your minds, that which is most agreeable to God; and to explode, discountenance, and repel, with equal ardour and activity, what you know in your hearts he abhors.

“Preachers of all denominations, to you I appeal. Preach the Gospel of Peace. Let the doctrines of peace and good-will for ever resound in the ears of the people.

“Bishops, and all who are pre-eminent in ecclesiastical dignity! I call upon you, that the high authority and influence which you possess over the minds of both kings and people may be exerted to bind upon their hearts with bonds indissoluble, the sacred obligations of peace.

“Dukes, lords, grandees, place-men and magistrates of every description! I appeal to you that your hearty good-will may co-operate in the work of peace,

with the wisdom of kings, and the piety of priests.

“I appeal to all who call themselves Christians! I urge them as they would manifest their sincerity, and preserve their consistency to unite with one heart and soul, in the abolition of war, and the establishment of perpetual and universal peace.”—*Translation of the Complaint of Peace, page 74, 75.*

May all Christians, my Lord, henceforth renounce the dangerous errors and illusions under which they have so long laboured concerning war. May they, when they say, “Thy kingdom come,” resolve to promote the cause of “Peace on earth, and good-will towards men.” And when they say, “Thy will be done,” may they determine, as far as in them lies, to do it. In these two short sentences, we have not only a prayer for universal peace, but a sure and certain way pointed out to obtain it.

When men shall pursue this way, the sword will cease to devour.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER II.

WAR INACCORDANT WITH NATURAL RELIGION.

Most Reverend Sir,

The wisdom displayed by our gracious and all-wise Creator in the formation of all animals is strikingly apparent ; and affords a most valuable lesson to man. All these, my Lord, are constructed in a manner peculiarly suited to the various modes of life destined for them. Those intended to live by preying upon others have organs assigned to them suited to this very purpose. But man differs from all other animals ; not only in the formation of his bodily frame, but more especially by being endowed with reason and conscience for his guides. In the use of these, his noblest gifts, the talents committed to his care, he can hardly fail to discover that he is made for higher and holier purposes than the irrational part of the creation : that he is formed, not to destroy, but to aid, to assist, and bless those around him. That he is made for peace, and not for war. These truths are so eloquently displayed by the learned Erasmus, in his COMPLAINT OF PEACE, that I do not deem it necessary to offer to your Grace any apology for the long extract I am about to

lay before you. I trust it will be found deserving the serious perusal of your Grace, of your clergy, and of many benevolent Christians.*

Speaking in the person of Peace, the learned writer says :—

“Though I certainly deserve no ill treatment from mortals yet if the insults and repulses I receive were attended with any advantage to them, I would content myself with lamenting in silence my own unmerited indignities and man’s injustice. But since, in driving me away from them, they remove the source of all human blessings, and let in a deluge of calamities on themselves, I am more inclined to bewail their misfortune, than complain of ill usage to myself; and I am reduced to the necessity of weeping over and commiserating those whom I wished to view rather as objects of indignation than of pity.

“For though rudely to reject one who loves them as I do, may appear to be savage cruelty; to feel an aversion for one who has deserved so well of them, base ingratitude; to trample on one who has nursed and fostered them with all a parent’s care, an unnatural want of filial affection; yet voluntarily to renounce so many

* THE COMPLAINT OF PEACE was reprinted in 1802. The original work, *Querella Pacis*, was written in 1517. It was dedicated to Philip of Burgundy, Bishop of Utrecht, a man who bore an excellent character, who had refused the bishopric, which was forced upon him; who had said with truth, *Nolo Episcopari*, and who was, what he ought to be (as a christian man, and a christian prelate) a zealous promoter of peace; notwithstanding it was, as usual, vehemently opposed by the courtiers of his time. The Bishop writes as follows: *Philip of Burgundy, Bishop of Utrecht, to Erasmus of Rotterdam sendeth health.*

“My very learned, my very dear friend Erasmus, I duly received your letter, which I assure you, afforded me much relief in the midst of those numerous cares with which I am almost overwhelmed. Your Complaint of Peace delights not only myself, to whom it is expressly dedicated, but all sincere professors of Christianity.”—See Preface to the work, viii.—xi.

and so great advantages as I always bring in my train, to go in quest of evils infinite in number and shocking in nature, how can I account for such perverse conduct, but by attributing it to downright madness? We may be angry with the wicked, but we can only pity the insane. What can I do but weep over them? And I weep over them the more bitterly, because they weep not for themselves. No part of their misfortune is more deplorable than their insensibility to it. It is one great step to convalescence, to know the extent and inveteracy of a disease.

“Now, if I, whose name is Peace, am a personage glorified by the united praise of God and man, as the fountain, the parent, the nurse, the patroness, the guardian of every blessing which either heaven or earth can bestow; if without me nothing is flourishing, nothing safe, nothing pure or holy, nothing pleasant to mortals, or grateful to the Supreme Being: if, on the contrary, war is one vast ocean, rushing on mankind, of all the united plagues and pestilences in nature; if, at its deadly approach, every blossom of happiness is instantly blasted, every thing that was improving gradually degenerates and dwindles away to nothing, every thing that was firmly supported, totters on its foundation, every thing that was formed for long duration comes to a speedy end, and every thing that was sweet by nature is turned into bitterness; if war is so unhallowed, that it becomes the deadliest bane of piety and religion; if there is nothing more calamitous to mortals, and more detestable to heaven, I ask, how, in the name of God, can I believe those beings to be rational crea-

tures ; how can I believe them to be otherwise than stark mad ; who, with such a waste of treasure, with so ardent a zeal, with so great an effort, with so many arts, so much anxiety, and so much danger, endeavour to drive me away from them, and purchase endless misery and mischief at a price so high ?

“If they were wild beasts who thus despised and rejected me, I could bear it more patiently ; because I should impute the affront to nature, who had implanted in them so savage a disposition. If I were an object of hatred to dumb creatures, I could overlook their ignorance, because the powers of mind necessary to perceive my excellence have been denied to them. But it is a circumstance equally shameful and marvellous, that though nature has formed one animal, and one alone, with powers of reason, and a mind participating of divinity ; one animal, and one alone, capable of sentimental affection and social union ; I can find admission among the wildest of wild beasts, and the most brutal of brutes, sooner than with this one animal ; the rational, immortal animal called man.

“Among the celestial bodies that are revolving over our heads, though the motions are not the same, and though the force is not equal, yet they move, and ever have moved, without clashing, in perfect harmony. The very elements themselves, though repugnant in their nature, yet, by a happy equilibrium, preserve eternal peace ; and amid the discordancy of their constituent principles, cherish, by a friendly intercourse and coalition, an uninterrupted concord.

“In living bodies, how all the various limbs harmonize,

and mutually combine, for common defence against injury! What can be more heterogeneous, and unlike, than the body and the soul? and yet with what strong bonds nature has united them, is evident from the pang of separation. As life itself is nothing else but the concordant union of body and soul, so is health the harmonious co-operation of all the parts and functions of the body.

“Animals destitute of reason live with their own kind in a state of social amity. Elephants herd together; sheep and swine feed in flocks; cranes and crows take their flight in troops; storks have their public meetings to consult previously to their emigration, and feed their parents when unable to feed themselves; dolphins defend each other by mutual assistance; and every body knows, that both ants and bees have respectively established, by general agreement, a little friendly community.

“But I need dwell no longer on animals, which, though they want reason, are evidently furnished with sense. In trees and plants one may trace the vestiges of amity and love. Many of them are barren, unless the male plant is placed in their vicinity. The vine embraces the elm, and other plants cling to the vine. So that things which have no powers of sense to perceive any thing else, seem strongly to feel the advantages of union.

“But plants, though they have not powers of perception, yet, as they have life, certainly approach very nearly to those things which are endowed with sentient faculties. What then is so completely insensible as stony substance? yet even in this, there appears to be

a desire of union. Thus the loadstone attracts iron to it, and holds it fast in its embrace, when so attracted. Indeed, the attraction of cohesion, as a law of love, takes place throughout all inanimate nature.

"I need not repeat, that the most savage of the savage tribes, in the forest, live among each other in amity. Lions shew no fierceness to the lion race. The boar does not brandish his deadly tooth against his brother boar. The lynx lives in peace with the lynx. The serpent shews no venom in his intercourse with his fellow serpent ; and the loving kindness of wolf to wolf, is proverbial.

"But I will add a circumstance still more marvellous. The accursed spirits, by whom the concord between heaven and human beings was originally interrupted, and to this day continues interrupted, hold union with one another, and preserve their usurped power, such as it is, by unanimity !*

"Yet man to man, whom, of all created beings, concord would most become, and who stands most in need of it, neither nature, so powerful and irresistible in every thing else, can reconcile ; neither human compacts unite ;⁵ neither the great advantages which would evidently arise from unanimity combine, nor the actual feeling and experience of the dreadful evils of discord cordially endear. To all men the human form is the same, the sound made by the organs of utterance similar : and while other species of animals differ from each other chiefly in the shape of their bodies, to men alone

* Thus Milton :

O shame to men ! Devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds ; men only disagree.

is given a reasoning power, which is indeed common to all men, yet in a manner so exclusive, that it is not at the same time common to any other living creature. To this distinguished being is also given the power of speech, the most conciliating instrument of social connection and cordial love. Throughout the whole race of men are sown by nature the seeds of virtue, and of every excellent quality. From nature man receives a mild and gentle disposition, so prone to reciprocal benevolence that he delights to be loved for the pleasure of being loved, without any view to interest ; and feels a satisfaction in doing good, without a wish or prospect of remuneration. This disposition to do disinterested good, is natural to man, unless in a few instances, where, corrupted by depraved desires, which operate like the drugs of Circe's cup, the human being has degenerated to the brute. Hence even the common people, in the ordinary language of daily conversation, denominate whatever is connected with mutual good will, humane ; so that the word humanity no longer describes man's nature, merely in a physical sense ; but signifies human manners, or a behaviour, worthy the nature of man, acting his proper part in civil society.

“Tears also are a distinctive mark fixed by nature, and appropriated to her favourite, man. They are a proof of placability, a forgiving temper ; so that if any trifling offence be given or taken, if a little cloud of ill humour darken the sunshine, there soon falls a gentle shower of tears, and the cloud melts into a sweet serenity.

“Thus it appears, in what various ways nature has

taught man her first great lesson of love and union. Nor was she content to allure to benevolence by the pleasurable sensations attending it ; nor did she think she had done enough, when she rendered friendship pleasant ; and therefore she determined to make it necessary. For this purpose, she so distributed among various men different endowments of the mind and the body, that no individual should be so completely furnished with all of them, but that he should want the occasional assistance of the lowest orders, and even of those who are most moderately furnished with ability. Nor did she give the same talents either in kind or in degree to all, evidently meaning that the inequality of her gifts should be ultimately equalized by a reciprocal interchange of good offices and mutual assistance. Thus, in different countries, she has caused different commodities to be produced, that expediency itself might introduce commercial intercourse. She furnished other animals with appropriate arms or weapons for defence or offence, but man alone she produced unarmed, and in a state of perfect imbecillity, that he might find his safety in association and alliance with his fellow-creatures. It was necessity which led to the formation of communities ; it was necessity which led communities to league with each other, that, by the union of their force, they might repel the incursion either of wild beasts or banditti. So that there is nothing in the whole circle of human affairs, which is entirely sufficient of itself for self-maintenance, or self-defence. In the very commencement of life, the human race had been extinct, unless conjugal union had con-

tinued the race. With difficulty could man be born into the world, or as soon as born would he die, leaving life at the very threshold of existence, unless the friendly hand of the careful matron, and the affectionate assiduities of the nurse, lent their aid to the helpless babe. To preserve the poor infant, Nature has given the fond mother the tenderest attachment to it, so that she loves it even before she sees it. Nature, on the other hand, has given the children a strong affection for the parent, that they may become supports, in their turn, to the imbecillity of declining age; and that thus filial piety may remunerate (after the manner of the stork) to the second childhood of decrepitude, the tender cares experienced in infancy from parental love. Nature has also rendered the bonds both of kindred and affinity strong; a similarity of natural disposition, inclinations, studies, nay of external form, becomes a very powerful cause of attachment; and there is a secret sympathy of minds, a wonderful lure to mutual affection, which the ancients, unable to account for, attributed, in their admiration of it, to the tutelar genius, or the guardian angel.

“By such and so many plain indications of her meaning, has Nature taught mankind to seek peace, and ensure it. She invites them to it by various allurements, she draws them to it by gentle violence, she compels them to it by the strong arm of necessity. After all, then, what infernal being, all-powerful in mischief, bursting every bond of nature asunder, fills the human bosom with an insatiable rage for war! If familiarity with the sight had not first destroyed all

surprise at it, and custom, soon afterwards, blunted the sense of its evil, who could be prevailed upon to believe that those wretched beings are possessed of rational souls, the intellects and feelings of human creatures, who contend, with all the rage of furies, in everlasting feuds, and litigations, ending in murder! Robbery, blood, butchery, desolation, confound, without distinction, every thing sacred and profane. The most hallowed treaties, mutually confirmed by the strongest sanctions, cannot stop the enraged parties from rushing on to mutual destruction, whenever passion or mistaken interest urges them to the irrational decision of the battle.

“ Though there were no other motive to preserve peace, one would imagine that the common name of man might be sufficient to secure concord between all who claim it. But be it granted that Nature has no effect on men as men, (though we have seen that Nature rules as she ought to do in the brute creation) yet, must not Christ therefore avail with christians? Be it granted that the suggestions of nature have no effect with a rational being, (though we see them have great weight even on inanimate things without sense) yet, as the suggestions of the christian religion are far more excellent than those of nature, why does not the christian religion persuade those who profess it, of a truth which it recommends above all others, that is, the expediency and necessity of *peace on earth*, and *good-will towards men* ; or, at least, why does it fail of effectually dissuading from the unnatural, and more than brutal, madness of waging war ?

“When I, whose name is Peace, do but hear the word man pronounced, I eagerly run to him as to a being created purposely for me, and confidently promising myself, that with him I may live for ever in uninterrupted tranquility, but when I also hear the title of Christian added to the name of Man, I fly with additional speed, hoping that with christians I may build an adamantine throne, and establish an everlasting empire.”—*Complaint of Peace*, page 13—20.

The eloquence of the writer, the justness of his remarks, and the high importance of the subject, will, I trust, render any apology unnecessary for the length of the extract from this valuable work. Truly rejoiced should I be, to induce your Grace, or any benevolent friend of Peace, to reprint the whole pamphlet. It might help to check the recklessness with which human blood has been spilled in our own times. It might help to check the heroic, or rather the savage spirit, which still pervades what is called the civilized part of the world.

From the following fable, extracted from the *Idler*, the learned Dr. Johnson appears, at one period of his life, to have entertained opinions not very dissimilar to those of Erasmus. After some prefatory remarks concerning the supposed power of animals to impart their thoughts to each other, he says :

“A shepherd of Bohemia has, by long abode in the forests, enabled himself to understand the voice of birds ; at least he relates with great confidence, a story, of which the credibility is left to be considered by the learned.

"As I was sitting, *said he*, within a hollow rock, and watching my sheep in the valley, I heard two vultures interchangably crying on the cliff. Both voices were earnest and deliberate. My curiosity prevailed over the care of my flock. I climbed slowly and silently from crag to crag, concealed among the shrubs, till I found a cavity, in which I might sit and listen, without suffering or giving disturbance.

"I soon perceived that my labour would be well repaid, for an old vulture was sitting on a naked prominence, with her young about her, whom she was instructing in the arts of a vulture's life, and preparing by the last lecture, for their final dismission to the mountains and skies.

"My children, (*said the vulture,*) you will the less want my instructions, because you have had my practice before your eyes; you have seen me snatch, from the farm, the household fowl; you have seen me seize the leveret in the bush, and the kid in the pasture; you know how to fix your talons and how to balance your flight when you are laden with your prey. But you remember the taste of more delicious food: I have often regaled you with the flesh of man. Tell us, *said the young vultures*, where man may be found, and how he may be known, his flesh is surely the natural food of a vulture. Why have you never brought a man in your talons to the nest? He is too bulky, *said the mother*: when we find a man, we can only tear away his flesh, and leave his bones on the ground. Since man is so big, *said the young ones*, How do you kill him? You are afraid of the wolf and the bear, by what powers are the vultures

superior to man? is man more defenceless than a sheep? We have not the strength of a man, returned the mother, and I am sometimes in doubt whether we have his subtilty; and the vulture would seldom feed upon his flesh, had not nature, that devoted him to our uses, infused into him a strange ferocity, which I have never observed in any other beast that feeds upon the earth. Two herds of men will often meet, and shake the earth with noise, and fill the air with fire. When you hear noise, and see fire, which flashes along the ground, hasten to the place, with your swiftest wing for men are surely destroying one another; you will find the ground smoking with blood and covered with carcasses, of which many are dismembered and mangled for the use of the vulture. But when men have killed their prey, said the pupil, Why do they not eat it? When the wolf has killed a sheep, he suffers not the vulture to touch it till he has satisfied himself. Is not man another kind of wolf? Man, said the mother, is the only beast who kills what he does not devour, and this quality makes him so much a benefactor to our species. If men kill our prey, and lay it in our way, said the young one, what need shall we have of labouring for ourselves? Because man will sometimes, replied the mother, remain for a long time quiet in his den. The old vultures will tell you when you are to watch his motions. When you see men in great number moving closely together, like flocks of storks, you may conclude that they are hunting, and that you will soon revel in human blood. But still, said the young one, I would gladly know the reason of this mutual slaughter, I

could never kill what I could not eat. My child, said the mother, this is a question which I cannot answer, though I am reckoned the most subtile bird of the mountain. When I was young, I used frequently to visit the aviary of an old vulture, who dwelt upon the Carpathian rocks; he had made many observations; he knew the places that afforded prey round his habitation, as far, in every direction, as the strongest wing can fly, between the rising and setting of the summer sun; he had fed, year after year, on the entrails of men. His opinion was, that men had only the appearance of animal life, being really vegetables with a power of motion; and that as the boughs of an oak are dashed together by the storm, that swine may fatten on the falling acorns, so men are, by some unaccountable power, driven one against another, till they lose their motion that vultures may be fed. Others think they have observed something of contrivance and policy among these mischievous beings; and those that hover more closely round them, pretend, that there is in every herd, one that gives directions to the rest, and seems to be more eminently delighted with wild carnage. What it is that entitles him to such pre-eminence we know not, he is seldom the biggest or the fleetest, but he shows by his eagerness and diligence, that he is, more than any others, a friend to the vultures.”*

As I have deviated into the paths of fiction, permit me, my Lord, to relate to you the particulars of another fable, by a writer of a very different character, a pro-

* The above constituted in the original No. 22 of the *Idler*; but on the republication of that work in volumes, this paper was suppressed by the author, and another substituted in its stead.

fessed unbeliever in the Christian revelation, the celebrated Dr. Franklin, a man of uncommon natural powers. He represents a young angel as sent from heaven on a visit to this world of ours, and with him an older angel is sent to accompany him as a guide, constantly to remain at his side. They had just arrived in the midst of the battle which was fought between Lord Rodney and the Count de Grasse. The young angel having heard the cries and the dying shrieks of the wounded, and being shocked at the different forms of misery and massacre which such a scene of naval fight presented to his view, exclaimed to the angel who was his guide, Oh! you have mistaken; I asked you to conduct me to the earth, but you have brought me to hell. No, replied the other angel, I have made no mistake; this is too surely earth, and not hell, for the devils never kill each other, but men do.

From these two fables, and the remarks of Erasmus, we may conclude, that these three great characters, one a pious Roman Catholic, another a devout layman of the Church of England, and the third a deist; but all possessing superior powers of mind, were decidedly of opinion that the practice of war is directly at variance with just principles of natural religion.

So thought our immortal bard. Permit me, my Lord, in his emphatic words, to conclude these remarks;

"Devil with devil damn'd, firm concord holds,
Men only disagree of creatures rational."

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER III.

WAR INACCORDANT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE JEWISH
RELIGION.

Most Reverend Sir,

Although the question of the lawfulness of war, or of the military profession, to a Christian, must be decided by the New Testament, yet as the strongest arguments in favour of war are generally deduced from the Jewish Scriptures ; and as the law is said to be our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ ; I must therefore request the attention of your Grace to the remarks I have to offer on the inaccordance of war with the spirit of the Jewish Religion.

The advocates for the lawfulness of war urge, that as the Jews, the highly-favoured people of God, were not only permitted, but absolutely commanded, by God to engage in wars—even wars of the most sanguinary character—wars of extermination—it cannot be criminal for Christians to do the same, when their rights are invaded.

This argument I have briefly noticed in my Letter to my sovereign, (page 26, 27) ; permit me, my Lord, in addition to what I have there said, to observe that

the wars in which the Israelites were commanded to engage, were for a special purpose; the purpose of rooting out the worship of false Gods. They were for the benefit of those with whom they waged war; they were for the purpose of destroying idolatry and establishing the worship of one God—the basis of happiness and national security. In these wars, if they paid strict obedience to the commands of God, success appears uniformly to have attended them; but the slightest deviation from the divine commands brought down upon them the threatened punishments for their disobedience. These wars, therefore, had a tendency to exercise the faith, and perfect the obedience of the Israelites; and also to exhibit to pagan nations the omnipotence of JEHOVAH over their false deities. Considered in this point of view, the Jewish wars afford, even to Christians of the present day, most valuable lessons. They teach us that God expects rectitude of heart, and that implicit obedience is due to him alone. As the Jews engaged in their wars in consequence of the express command of God, they afford not the smallest ground of excuse for Christians engaging in war, (much less for devoting themselves to the profession of arms as a trade to live by) unless they, like the Jews, can show a divine commission, or command, for entering into them, and for suspending the pacific principles of the Gospel. It is also to be remarked that, in regard to other wars, the Jews, by their prophets, sought counsel of God, before they engaged in them. Christians, alas! engage in murderous warfare with as little ceremony as they enter into a treaty of

commercial intercourse, or any minor concern. The power of making war depends on the sovereign alone, or perhaps on a few persons devoted to his will.

The Jewish wars, on account of their apparent cruelty, have often been adduced to show that the Bible, which gives us their history, cannot be of divine authority : these wars being evidently contrary to the divine attributes of goodness and mercy. It must be admitted that nothing unjust, or unworthy of God, can proceed from Him ; but the question is, Were these wars of that description ?

The command of God, as delivered by Moses, and set forth in the received Version of the Bible, appears peremptory ; but as the command to *utterly destroy* the seven nations of Canaan, so as to leave *none alive*, was never executed either by Joshua, or any of the Judges, nor yet by Samuel, David, or Solomon, and others after them, it seems reasonable to suppose that they did not understand this command as obliging them to put to death every individual of these nations ; but only utterly to destroy their *political* existence. This seems highly probable from considering the *whole* of the command given. (Deut. vii. 2—6.) “When the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee ; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them ; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them : Neither shalt thou make marriages with them ; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods : so will the anger of the Lord be

kindred against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." And, Num. xxxiii. 52, 53. "Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: and ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it."

If the Israelites, my Lord, by the expression, *smite them and utterly destroy them*, were positively commanded to put to death all the men, women, and children of these nations, the commands just enumerated appear to be not merely unnecessary, but absolutely contradictory: and, as the wisest and best of the Jewish rulers never obeyed the injunction to *put all to death*, it is clear they did not understand it as expressed in our translation of the Bible. If we consider the command to extend only to the *political* destruction of these nations, the justice and mercy of God will be apparent; for what dispensation of the great Ruler of the world can more accord with the divine attributes, than, by corrective punishments, however severe, to reclaim idolaters from the vice and misery inseparable from idolatry, and to establish the worship of the only true God; the only sure source of virtue and happiness.

The whole spirit of the Jewish religion, my Lord, seems abhorrent to the notion that human beings can innocently engage in war. Christ, we are told, came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. Of us, as of the Jews, what is it that God requires? Is it not to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God? But how is a soldier to do this? when commanded by his officer, he must leave mercy, justice, and humility to the winds. His Bible he may leave in his knapsack. The articles of war are his Bible. The sound of the drum his priest.

Again, my Lord, how is a soldier to keep the commandments when they run counter to the commands of his superior officer? I will only notice the sixth commandment, Thou shalt do no murder. By the laws of our country, taking away the lives of others with malice aforethought, constitutes the crime of murder. Where this is done premeditatedly and deliberately, as do soldiers, a judge, or jury, will require no other proof of the malicious intention. Allowing, however, that malicious intention, as it regards soldiers, does not exist, that they fight for glory, and in obedience to their superiors; then, my Lord, does not the crime of murder apply to their employers? By the laws of our country, the death of any person not dying in the course of nature, is strictly inquired into. If this law were applied to kings, what a load of guilt does this seem to lay upon those sovereign princes, who for years beforehand not only premeditate taking away the lives of those they denounce as enemies, but train up a portion of their subjects to the special trade of slaughtering

their brethren and fellow-men, and make the doing of this skilfully, the high road to wealth and honour. If the employers are herein guilty, in the sight of a just God, can those whom they employ be regarded as innocent? And can your Grace, I ask it with all due deference and respect, consider yourself innocent in declaring to those committed to your care that it is lawful for the subjects of Jesus Christ "to wear weapons and to serve in the wars?" and, consequently, that none can be admitted into the priesthood of the Church of England who think differently.

But, my Lord, allowing war under the Mosaical institution to be lawful which I by no means admit, it will not follow, that war is a lawful trade to live by, in time of peace; and for princes and great men to support themselves by it, as by a trade. Instead of doing this, and laying a tax upon the industrious, the Jewish warriors did not, like modern warriors, fight for hire; and when the end for which they engaged in war was accomplished, they returned to their peaceful occupations. Let Christian warriors, or those so called, do the same. Let them, if they will plead the practice of the Jews as their excuse for engaging in war, follow the example set them by the Jewish warriors. When Christians shall do this, they will be one step nearer to universal peace.

The conduct of David is sometimes quoted, as affording a sanction to war, and the military profession: but the beautiful psalms that are attributed to him, show that he loved, and that "he laboured for peace." From the rejection of his prayer for building the temple, we

may infer that God regards that man as less holy, who sheds blood in war, than he who refrains from doing so. I might, my Lord, quote many parts of the Old Testament, to shew the aversion of pious Jews to war ; but I shall only quote the words of the venerable Jeremiah, whose mantle seems to have fallen on the good Erasmus. Would to God that it would descend on the protestant priesthood ! “ I am pained at my heart : I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.”

Allowing, my Lord, that the profession is not so repugnant to the decalogue, and the precepts which pervade the Old Testament, as to the pacific precepts contained in the Gospel, yet the former, particularly the prophecies, bear testimony to a fact of the highest consequence to Christians. They testify that the Jewish dispensation was an imperfect dispensation ; that it is no rule to us ; that it was to pass away ; that new heavens and a new earth were to be created ; that all things were to become new. They testify moreover that the religion to be promulgated by the Messiah was to supersede that of Moses : that the spread of Christianity, or “ the knowledge of the Lord,” was to become universal, that it was to “ cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.” And the consequence of this dissemination of the knowledge of the Lord was to be, that men would “ beat their swords into ploughshares ;” and would “ learn war no more.” Isaiah ii. 2—4. Micah iv. 1—3.

This prophecy, were there no other to the same purport, shows plainly that the Mosaic dispensation was

imperfect, and that the religion to be promulgated by the Messiah was to correct its imperfections and introduce a better and happier state of things, when men were to dwell together in a state of happiness and security, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree. This cheering prophecy, my Lord, is of still higher use to us. It teaches us, by plain and direct inferences, what is the will of God under the new dispensation. It teaches us that his will, and consequently our duty, as individuals, is now to withdraw from the savage trade of war—to beat our swords into plough-shares. This plain, literal prophecy we may safely regard as our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. In this light the first Christians understood it, as I shall hereafter have occasion to show. When modern Christians shall follow their example the sword will cease to devour.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER IV.

WAR INACCORDANT WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

Most Reverend Sir,

I come now to show that war is altogether inaccordant with the spirit of Christianity—with the precepts taught by Christ and his Apostles. Here, my Lord, the evidence against war, and the profession of arms, though depending on inferences, appears to be perfectly clear and satisfactory, if not redundant. It is wholly against war.

The New Testament is called the Gospel of Peace ; and its divine Founder, the Prince of Peace. It contains not, as far as I can discover, a precept or command from Christ from which it can legitimately be inferred that it is lawful for his subjects to pursue warfare of any kind. The Apostle James asks a question directly in point. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? What, it may be asked, are those lusts, or *pleasures*, (for so the word is translated in the margin of our Bibles) from whence wars proceed? Are they not pride, ambition, envy, hatred, malice, covetousness? And are not all these

unholy lusts, or pleasures, expressly forbidden by our Saviour and his Apostles? Does not the whole of the New Testament abound with such prohibitions.

On the other hand, my Lord, the practice of every Christian grace and virtue enjoined by our Saviour and his Apostles, will be found to be totally irreconcilable with the military duties due from a soldier to his commanding officer. War may rather be said to subvert, and up-root, the whole of the Gospel at once, than to contradict any single precept or command. -

Should it be said, as it has been said, that some of the Gospel precepts, such as those enumerated in the sermon on the mount apply chiefly to individuals in their private capacities, or to the Apostles and early Christians; and that kings, in their public capacities, are not bound by them; nor yet officers holding high stations under them, whether civil, military, or ecclesiastical. Supposing this to be the case, two difficulties present themselves, neither of which, it is probable, your Grace will admit.

First. That if kings, and those holding high offices under them, have nothing to fear from breaking these divine commands of Jesus, they can, necessarily, have nothing to hope for from obedience to them. The blessings, or beatitudes, mentioned in the first verses of the sermon on the mount, apply not to them. So that in the mansions of the blessed, will not be found either princes or the high dignitaries of church or state.

Second. This rule places soldiers, and all occupying inferior stations, in such a situation that they must obey man, or their superior officer in the first place;

and God in the second. The apostolic rule is that we must obey God rather than man. Soldiers must look to man not to God for their reward. His servants we are to whom we obey.

Should it be said that this system, if closely followed, is a *radical* system; that it contemplates, not a reform of the present system, but a subversion of it; that it is revolution not reform. In answer to this grave remark, which I have considered with the seriousness it deserves, I would ask, with all the deference due to your Grace's high station, What would be the consequence of substituting the religion of Jesus in its native purity, for the religion which now assumes its name? The answer to this question would be, revolution. Revolution of the most blessed kind—It is so ascertained by angels "PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD-WILL TOWARDS MEN." The prophet Micah also thus answers this radical question; "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." Is it likely, my Lord, that this *revolution* will take place under Gospel ministers who teach that it is lawful for the subjects of Christ to wear weapons and serve in war? Is it likely that Christians will cease to learn war, whilst they consider the trade a lawful and a beneficial one?

Having, in my letter to my sovereign, (page 25, 26) shown that a warrior by profession is rendered incapable of obedience to those precepts which peculiarly

distinguish our holy religion, I will now, my Lord, state a few particulars, in order to show the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of a pious Christian, a member of the Church of England being also a member of the military profession.

The parental character of the Deity—the character in which he is exhibited in the scriptures, with the consequent brotherhood of mankind, form the basis of the religion of Jesus Christ ; they distinguish it from paganism. Though some highly gifted men among the heathens had confused notions of this sacred truth, yet they were mixed up with opinions derogatory to the character of a parent. This character of God, though revealed in the Jewish scriptures, was very imperfectly understood even by that people ; and the fraternal duties arising therefrom they disregarded. Not only were the heathen nations looked down upon with supreme contempt, but even the Samaritans, the worshippers of the same God, were regarded as objects of hatred, rather than of brotherly love. But the religion of the Prince of Peace unfolded better, more consistent, and more merciful views of the duties of mankind to each other as brothers. It instructed them, in imitation of their heavenly Father, and in imitation of his holy messenger, Jesus Christ, to be good and kind to all, even to the unthankful and evil. In the discharge of this most difficult duty, our Lord left us not only his precepts, but a most noble example for our guidance. He died, “the just for the unjust, to bring mankind to God.” He died “leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.” But how, my Lord, is a war-

rior to follow the steps of his Christian Captain? His duty is not to lay down his life, but to sacrifice the lives of others to gratify the malevolent orders of his master, whom he is bound, at all hazards, to obey.

Closely connected with the brotherly love which all Christians owe to each other, as children of the same merciful and universal parent; and, indeed, forming a part of it, is charity. This Christian grace, or virtue, is thus described by Saint Paul. "*Charity* suffereth long and is kind, charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things. Charity (love) never faileth." This is not only the peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of our holy religion, and of its divine founder; but it is the characteristic of God himself. God is *love*, (or charity.) Of his great love to mankind, he has given us the capacity of judging, and we are commanded to make the love of God to us the standard of our love to our brethren; towards them we must, if we hope to receive mercy, endeavour to be merciful, "as our Father also is merciful." But how is a warrior by profession to yield obedience to this golden rule. Will the master he is bound to, bear a comparison with the God of love?

In our holy religion, Love, not merely love to God, but love to our brethren—love to all human beings, is an essential principle. The love of those we are told, is the only proof we can give of our love to God, whom

we have not seen. Without love all religious attainments, however excellent, are valueless—if we have not charity, we are no Christians, we are “as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” If we consider the practice of this divine virtue as a cause; and it is difficult to find a more powerful one, whether it be to procure friends, or conciliate enemies, we have its blessed effects described before-hand in the prophecies to which I have already solicited the attention of your Grace;—“the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy.” I intreat your Grace to bear with me, whilst I endeavour to depict to you a few of the various particulars in which it is impossible for a warrior to practice this divine duty.

First. “Charity suffereth long and is kind.” Can the practice of this divine precept appertain to the warrior? His duty is to avenge, not to suffer, insults and injuries; and he is to do it quickly; he is not to suffer long and be kind. If insults are offered to his country, he is to maintain her honour. If offered to himself, he is to support his reputation unsullied; no one is even to suspect him of suffering an insult for a moment. To suffer long and be kind, would subject the warrior, whatever his station, to utter contempt, derision, and disgrace. Should it be said that this exercise of charity is only applicable to individual Christians in their private capacities, I ask to be informed, on what authority this is advanced; the Christian scriptures, which plainly teach long suffering, kindness, and forbearance, afford not the least sanction for

such a restriction. The greatest prince, professing Christianity, is, notwithstanding his high station, an individual Christian; and answerable, as well as the meanest subject, at the awful tribunal of God. And, if not permitted to avenge his own wrongs, we must infer that he cannot innocently employ others to avenge him; nor yet that any disciple of Christ can, with innocence, avenge the insults offered to others, even allowing them to be their lawful kings or rulers. The command is clear and absolute. We must obey God rather than man.

Secondly. "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly." Though military officers may not indulge in that kind of boasting which is common with their inferiors; yet it is essential to the warlike spirit to be puffed up, and to look down upon others. Every man in command is desirous to promote a vaunting spirit, and to persuade those under him, that four of them are more than a match for six of their enemies. To maintain that all men are brothers; that they must love their enemies as Christ has commanded, would be considered as little less than high treason or mutiny, in any mess-room, or barracks, in the united kingdom.

Thirdly. "Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." This is much to the same purport as to say, "Charity suffereth long and is kind;" and it is alike inapplicable to the military character. The soldier of a meek and forgiving temper, who should, as a Christian, be ready to bear insults, and injuries, whether offered to himself, or to his superior

officer, though an ornament to his Christian profession, would soon be discarded from his military honours. Like salt deprived of its savour, he would be trampled upon as useless.

In whatever light we consider the heroic spirit—a spirit essential to him who embraces the profession of arms, it appears to be in direct opposition to the heaven-born virtue, charity; which is emphatically called the fulfilling of the law. For a soldier to practise charity, and, at the same time, faithfully to obey his superiors, seems to be as impossible as it is for him to serve two masters whose commands are in direct opposition to each other: as impossible as it is for him to serve God and Mammon.

We read much, my Lord, not only in the Christian Scriptures, but also in the writings of Christians of all periods, of the duty of Christians taking up the Cross, and following Christ. This may be considered as an essential part of the duty of every Christian. Ever since the time of Constantine, who impiously displayed the Cross as a military standard, the exhibiting it has been superstitiously considered in succeeding ages, as a security from danger, from disease, and even from death itself. Like the phylacteries of the Jews, and with equal consistency, this symbol has been regarded not only as a perfect security from danger of every kind; but also as a symbol of inward purity and holiness. Though these fopperies in religion are now nearly banished from a large portion of what is called Christendom, yet the ministers of Christ very properly

continue to maintain the necessity of Christians taking up the Cross and following their divine Lord and Master. How, my Lord, can a soldier do this? He is enrolled under another and a very different master, whom he must, at his peril, obey. To take up the Cross, and follow Christ no doubt includes, along with other duties, a renunciation of all those evil passions to which, whether by nature or habit, we are subject. Among these we may reckon pride, covetousness, revenge, lasciviousness. In subjecting these, I think, my Lord, you will allow that we imitate Christ, or take up our Cross and follow him, in a part of our duty of no easy attainment. We crucify the flesh, and its lusts, or pleasures. A tame submission to injuries and insults was considered not only by the Greeks and Romans, but also by the Jews, as a mark of cowardice; and, as such, deserving of contempt; nor is it regarded in any other light by the generality of Christians. Among these the heroic, though the very reverse of the Christian character, is generally esteemed and patronized. Dr. Paley, in his chapter on the morality of the Gospel, as I have already observed, says, "no two things can be more contrary than the heroic and the Christian character." Whether, in our colleges, the ministers of the Gospel of peace acquire the Christian or the heroic character is a question of high importance, as regards the religion of Christ, and the peace and happiness of the whole world. Having so long failed in introducing Christianity into China, we are now, *vi et armis*, teaching that singular nation the *morality of the Gospel*.

But, my Lord, to return to the subject from which

I have digressed. Whatever difference of opinion there may be concerning the extent of taking up the Cross, I run no risk in affirming, that no one can be said to comply with this injunction who does not practice the duty of forgiveness of injuries and insults ; leaving the avenging of them to the Great God to whom vengeance belongeth. But warriors, and those who employ them, take vengeance into their own hands ; and instead of taking up the Cross, take up the musket. Should a soldier, in any sense that can be rationally put upon this figurative expression, take up his Cross—should he attain *nice notions* (see note, page 15, 16 of the Letter to the King) about religion, he has no business to be a soldier. For military purposes he becomes useless ; it being his duty to avenge insults, whether offered to himself or to those by whom he is paid. I entreat your Grace ; I entreat all ministers of the Prince of Peace, to attend to what the eloquent Erasmus says on this subject.

“The unfeeling mercenary soldier, hired for a few pieces of paltry coin a day, to do the work of a man butcher, carries before him the standard of the Cross ; and that very figure becomes the symbol of war, which alone ought to teach every one that looks at it that war ought to be abolished. What hast thou to do with the Cross of Christ on thy banners, thou blood stained soldier ? With such a disposition as thine ; with deeds like thine of robbery and murder, thy proper standard would be a dragon, a tiger, or a wolf.

“That Cross is the standard of him who conquered, not by fighting, but by dying ; who came not to de-

stroy men's lives, but to save them. It is a standard, the very sight of which might teach you what sort of enemies you have to war against, if you are a Christian, and how you may be sure to gain the victory.

"I see you, while the standard of salvation is in one hand, rushing in with a sword in the other to murder your brother; and under the banner of the Cross destroying the life of one who to the Cross owes his salvation. Even from the holy sacrament itself (for it is sometimes, at the same hour, administered in opposite camps) in which is signified the complete union of all Christians, the warriors who have just received it, run instantly to arms, and endeavour to plunge the dreadful steel in each others vitals. Of a scene thus infernal, and fit only for the eyes of the accursed spirits who delight in mischief and misery, the pious warriors would make Christ the spectator, if it could be supposed that he would be present at it. The absurdest circumstance of all those respecting the Cross, as a standard, is that you see it glittering and waving high in the air, in both the contending armies at once. Divine service is also performed to the same Christ in both armies at the same time. What a shocking sight! Lo! Crosses against Crosses; and Christ on this side firing bullets against Christ on the other; Cross against Cross, and Christ against Christ. The banner of the Cross, significant of the Christian profession, is used on each side to strike terror into the opposite enemy. How dare they, on this occasion, to attack what, on all others they adore? Because they are unworthy to

bear the true Cross at all, and rather deserve to be themselves crucified."

I will only, my Lord, adduce one particular more to show the absolute inaccordance of our holy religion with the duties required of a warrior by profession. It is to show that he is incapacitated from joining in Christian worship. That he cannot worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; or join in that admirable summary of prayer left us by our blessed Lord and Master. Here again I entreat your Grace, and all ministers of the Gospel of Peace, to attend to the words of the pacific Erasmus.

" Let us now imagine we hear a soldier among these fighting Christians saying the Lord's prayer. "*Our Father*, says he, O hardened wretch ! can you call him Father, when you are just going to cut your brother's throat ? *Hallowed be thy name* ; How can the name of God be more impiously unhallowed than by mutual bloody murder among you, his sons ? *Thy kingdom come*, Do you pray for the coming of his kingdom, while you are endeavouring to establish an earthly despotism by spilling the blood of God's sons, and subjects ? *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. His will in heaven is for peace, but you are now meditating war. Dare you say to your Father in heaven, *Give us this day our daily bread* ; when you are going, the next minute perhaps, to burn your brother's corn fields, and had rather lose the benefit of them yourself, than suffer him to enjoy them unmolested. With what face can you say, *Forgive us our trespasses*,

as we forgive them that trespass against us, when, so far from forgiving your own brother, you are going with all the haste you can, to murder him in cold blood, for an alleged trespass, that, after all, is but imaginary. Do you presume to deprecate the danger of temptation, who, not without great danger to yourself, are doing all you can to force your brother into danger? Do you deserve to be delivered from evil, that is from the evil being to whose impulse you submit yourself, and by whose spirit you are now guided, in contriving the greatest possible evil to your brother?"

I have now, my Lord, I trust, shewn that all war is in direct opposition to the spirit of our holy religion, as delivered by Christ and his apostles, and that no warrior by profession can possibly pay obedience to his superior officer, and at the same time comply with the requirements of the Gospel.

1. In the first place; I have shewn that no warrior can practically believe in the parental character of God. That he cannot claim God as his Father, he cannot regard mankind as his brethren.

2. That he cannot practice that charity which is the fulfilling of the law, and without which all other Christian virtues are worthless—that they become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

3. That he cannot take up his Cross and follow Christ. Consequently he cannot be a Christian. He has not the spirit of Christ.

4. That he cannot with consistency and sincerity repeat the admirable prayer of our Lord.

From all these particulars it will follow that he can have no claim to the promised blessings of the Gospel; and I crave your Lordship's permission, before I close this part of my subject, to examine how far a consistent member of the Church of England can lay claim to the blessings of the Gospel. I beg to refer your Grace to a summary of the Christian graces and duties at pages 25 and 26. They are there enumerated in order to show that a warrior by profession cannot obey them, and his commanding officer at the same time. I now call your Grace's attention to this summary of duties in order to show that the consistent Churchman is placed in nearly the same dilemma, as the warrior by profession.

Scripture says, *Have peace one with another ; By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.*

The xxxvii article of the Church says that "*It is lawful for Christian men, at the Commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons and to serve in the wars.*" Hence, my Lord, I infer that whenever called upon by the Magistrate, or whenever a declaration of war takes place a soldier may lawfully go to war with his neighbour or brother, he may leave peace to the winds, and fight till one or both are killed. It would seem strange to say, but does it not follow that "By this shall all men know that I am a true Churchman?"

Again, Scripture says "*Lay aside all malice. Put off anger, wrath, malice. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.*"

From the xxxvii Article of the Church established by law, I infer that, when commanded by the Magistrate, I may, towards his enemies, indulge in all malice. That, when war is declared, I may suspend the precepts of the Gospel of peace, indulge in all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking. And, my Lord, will it not necessarily follow, that, by so doing, all men shall know that I am a true Churchman. I might easily show that all the Christian precepts enumerated at pages 25 and 26 are annihilated by the xxxvii Article; but I trust I have said enough to shew the utter inaccordancy of this Article with obedience to the precepts of Christ.

A question may here be asked, What is Christianity? and what are its requirements? The answer to the first we have on high authority—the authority of angels—“Peace on earth and good-will towards men.” This is Christianity: and its requirements may be conveyed in one word; Obey.—Obey whom?—Obey God rather than man. The duties Christianity requires are summed up in few words in our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount; as are also the blessings, or beatitudes it confers. This excellent discourse contains not only every thing calculated to make us good and virtuous, but every thing to render us amiable, pleasant and agreeable to each other. St. Paul, in strict accordance with the precepts of this discourse, exhorts the Philippian converts: “Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of

others." In the same spirit, and in strict conformity with our Lord's discourse, St. Peter says, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it."—1 Pet. iii. 8-11. The sermon on the mount, my Lord, contains in little room, not only a system of kindness and benevolence, but a system of politeness the most perfect that was ever penned; and its divine Author will be found to be not only the most accomplished person that ever appeared in this lower world, but the greatest of heroes. His system of politeness will stand the test of scrutiny: it will be found to be as much superior to that of Lord Chesterfield, as selfishness to magnanimity—as truth to falsehood—as light to darkness—as Christianity to paganism.

How much, my Lord, is contained in the precept, Resist not evil! But, it is contended that this Christian precept, if acted upon, would fill the world with evil: that if magistrates and persons in power acted upon it, crime would escape and disorder become universal. But this discourse was delivered to multitudes, not to magistrates to whom our Lord never addressed his discourses. This appears certain from the connexion in which this precept occurs.

I might here, my Lord, surely, lay down my pen,

and consider my task accomplished, so far as religion, natural or revealed, is concerned. But so strong, and so deeply rooted, are the prejudices of mankind in favour of the lawfulness, not to say the necessity of war, that it becomes expedient to give line upon line, and precept upon precept, in order to exhibit not only its deformity and total inaccordance with religion natural or revealed, but also its disagreement with the dictates of reason and expedience. War has been so long sanctioned by princes and prelates, by the reputed wise and good, by the clergy and laity, by churchmen and dissenters, by trinitarians and unitarians, or by a large majority of all these, as a part of the unalterable system by which an omnipotent, and omniscient Ruler keeps the world in order, that there seems to be a degree of folly, or as some think even of impiety, in attempting to show that war—war of any description—is at variance with just views of religion. A large portion of mankind, alas, consider wars as an essential part of the divine government; as essential and as unavoidable as “fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storm.” These, being out of the reach of human interference, mortals leave to the management of Omnipotence; but, the moral laws of God,—the doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God—these sacred duties as expedience, or fancied necessity, or fashion have dictated; in war are disregarded. A declaration of war annuls them—annuls every thing sacred—and vain men, protestants as well as catholics, seat themselves in the temple of God, declaring themselves to be Gods. Be assured, my Lord, that, where

war is, there is Antichrist—there is the man of sin. We need not go to Rome in search of him—he is at our doors. But, my Lord,

“———War’s a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at.”

Be assured, my Lord, that “In proportion as truth shall find a tongue, wars will cease.”

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER V.

WAR INACCORDANT WITH THE EVIDENCE OF PROPHECY.

Most Reverend Sir,

It may appear somewhat presumptuous in a seaman to address a letter to your Grace on the subject of prophecy, a subject so intimately connected with your theological studies, and so perfectly foreign to the pursuits in which a large portion of my long life has been passed ; but, intending to confine my remarks to that part of prophecy which is connected with the subject of war, I trust my presumption will be deemed pardonable.

Having, as I trust, demonstrated in my preceding letters that all war is in direct opposition to correct notions of religion, whether natural or revealed, and particularly to the mild spirit of Christianity, I might lay down my pen, deeming all further evidence, as to its unlawfulness, unnecessary. But the prejudices of mankind have run so strong in a contrary direction for so many ages, that it becomes the duty of the friend of peace to avail himself of every argument that can strengthen his position. The prophecies of the Old

Testament, not only bear evidence of the truth of the religion of the Messiah, that it was to be of divine origin, but they afford clear testimony as to its character; that it was to be a religion producing universal and lasting peace. It, therefore, becomes necessary, not only to the friend of peace, but to every man, layman, or ecclesiastic, to examine these prophecies and to compare them with the events to which they are supposed to relate. Taking this view of the question, I trust I shall be held excusable in intruding further on the time and patience of your Grace.

Although we are not fully informed of the particular circumstances under which many of the prophecies of the Old Testament were delivered, nor yet of the exact events to which they relate, we may conclude that they all originated in the wisdom, the mercy, and condescension of God; that they are not given to us to gratify the speculative curiosity of inquisitive men, who wish to pry into futurity. They are no doubt given us for our present use and benefit; and, like every part of holy writ, are to be considered by us as "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," and, therefore highly valuable to us as guides for our conduct.

Previous to the advent of our Saviour, whether founded on prophecy, or the signs of the times, a very general expectation prevailed that some great change in the affairs of the world was about to take place. The same kind of feeling seems at present to prevail; and, if we consider the signs of the times, the world passing from a state of ignorance to one of compara-

tive knowledge ; and, further, if we contemplate the prophecies supposed to relate to the present times, we shall find abundant cause to admire the wisdom and goodness of God, towards a world immersed in vice and sensuality, in thus preparing the minds of men against the danger of change ; although that change should be from ignorance and error, to knowledge and truth. Though “ clouds and thick darkness ” may in the interval prevail, yet, my Lord, we have full assurance that the wilderness we live in will be converted into a fruitful garden. That “ men will beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks ; ” when they will cease to learn war, and live in a state of peace and security, “ every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none to make him afraid ; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.” (Micah) Here, my Lord, we learn that in future times—times when the Gospel of peace shall be better understood—times when it (*the word of the Lord*) shall “ cover the earth as the waters cover the sea,” that it will be by the disuse, not the use of the sword, that the world will attain peace, order, and security.

Here, my Lord, I would with much deference ask your Grace, Why has God thus made known to us his gracious purposes regarding the future ? Is it that we may be invited to pray to him “ to give *peace in our time ? To give to our most gracious Queen the victory over all her enemies ?* ” And, with solemn faces, implore him to “ *abate their pride, assuage their malice, and confound their devices ? that we, being armed with his defence, may be preserved evermore from all*

peril?" In short, my Lord, Are these prophecies given us to incite us to devout prayer, or to virtuous actions? To pray to God to beat our swords into plough-shares, or to do this ourselves? Has not God graciously given us the Gospel of peace? and, Is it not sufficient to enable us to do for ourselves what we implore him to do for us? In the abundance of his mercy, has he not sent his well-beloved Son, the Prince of Peace, to instruct us, by his example, in the paths of peace? Is not our conduct, my Lord, something like that of the waggoner in the fable, praying to Jupiter to help him out of the slough? And, my Lord, if we would wish to *abate the pride, assuage the malice, and confound the devices of enemies*, we have only to follow the rule of the wise man, (Prov. xxv. 21—26.) sanctioned by the apostle. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." When men shall imbibe this Christian spirit, kings will want soldiers, and war will cease. Besides, my Lord, if it be lawful for Christians to fight, is it not somewhat anomalous to pray to God to put an end to fighting?

In my letter to my then sovereign, George the Fourth, to which I beg to refer your Grace, (see page 21 and 22) I have quoted the prophecies which more particularly apply to the present occasion; viz. Isaiah ii. 2-4. and ix. 1-9. (See also Micah iv. 1-4.) I have there pointed out that these prophecies have not been fulfilled; and that so long as Christians engage in war,

these prophecies, by the plainest inferences, testify that Jesus is not the true Messiah. Of this fact, for it is a fact, Jews and sceptics do not fail to avail themselves ; the following is a case strictly in point.

Prior to a sermon delivered at Falmouth in September, 1820, by a popular preacher, in order to promote the views of the Society for the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, a paper was affixed to the doors of the Church of that town, of which the following is a copy.

“ Our Messiah, when he comes, will establish a system of mercy, and peace, and kindness upon earth ; while among you, Christians, nothing but disputes, animosities and cruelties, mark your passage through the world. Possibly, your religion sanctions these things : ours does not ; for, with us, the goodness and beneficence, alone of the Mosaic laws, constitute their authority, and proclaim aloud their emanation from a good and beneficent God. We want no better, we expect no better, until Messiah shall indeed come. Then (if the prophets of our sacred volume speak true) the conduct of man towards his fellows will be the reverse of what it is now ! ‘ Every man shall sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more : but the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the wolf and the lamb feed together, and a little child shall lead them.’ Has this happy period, this golden era of public peace and private love, ever yet been witnessed ? Speak candidly, Christian ! Has

it been once seen through a lapse of 1800 years?

Your brother in the desert,

Tizri, 5823.

ZECHEK LACHORCAN.

The above paper was written, it is supposed, by a Jew resident in the town of Falmouth. Who was the author of it is, however, of trifling moment: it is with the truth and justice of the remarks that we have to do; and never can Christians prove to the Jews that Jesus was the true Messiah so long as they continue to learn war.

The reverend Stanley Faber, in his preface to his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, lays it down as a rule for interpreting them, "To allow no interpretation of a prophecy to be valid, except the prophecy agree in every particular with the event to which it is supposed to relate." A greater than Mr. Faber, Moses, lays down nearly the same rule, when he says, (Deut. xviii. 22.) "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

In direct contradiction to his own wholesome rule, Mr. Faber, in a sermon preached before the Society for converting the Jews to Christianity in April, 1822, quotes these prophecies, Isa. ii. 2. and Isa. xi. 9., in order to prove the truth of Christianity; for it so happens that these prophecies, or rather this prophecy, (for they both relate to the same event) so far from agreeing in every particular with the event to which

it is supposed to relate, is directly at variance therewith. This prophecy is yet unaccomplished ; and Zecher Lachorcan's arguments, or assertions, remain unanswered : and, if the religion of the Church of England is the same as that bequeathed to us by the Prince of Peace, they are wholly unanswerable.

To account for the non-fulfilment of this prophecy Mr. F. says, page 10, "It is pretty clear that the accomplishment of these and many other parallel prophecies would have been frustrated, if the conversion of the Gentiles had gone on equably and rapidly in proportion to its original progress : for, had the whole Gentile world been converted in the course of the first nine or ten centuries, there would have been no room for the accomplishment of those numerous predictions, which fix their general conversion, upon a grand and national scale, to the *latter ages*. Hence every prediction of this nature involves an intimation, that a long stop would be put to the progress of the Gospel, during a middle and intervening period : so that, after a certain number of the pagan nations should have been converted during the first ages, a pause (as it were) would take place ; and then at length, in the last ages, all those, which had hitherto remained in a state of moral darkness, would be happily and triumphantly brought within the pale of the Christian church."

At page 13, Mr. F. says, "The truth is, that whatever partial success may attend missionary exertions in regard to individual Pagans or Mahommedans, the Gentiles will never be converted *nationally* and upon

a large scale, until the Jews shall have been first converted: and the ground of this very important position is, that *the converted Jews are destined, in the unsearchable wisdom of God, to be the sole finally successful Missionaries to the Gentile world.*

“Such I believe to be the secret of the small emolument, with which we Gentiles attempt the conversion of the yet unreclaimed Gentiles. The *fact* of our little success is notorious and indisputable: the *reason* is, because an honour, reserved for *others*, neither will nor can be conferred upon *us*.”

Admitting the justness of the conclusions of this learned and amiable commentator, it may seem somewhat presumptuous in a seaman to suggest to your Grace, and to Mr. F., and other commentators, that these remarks might with advantage have been further extended. They appear to convey what is true, but not the whole truth. They lead us to the belief that for some cause, unsearchable by us, God has destined to the Jews the high honour of converting the Gentile world. Might not Mr. F., with some propriety, as well as humility, have concluded the last sentence I have quoted from him in the following manner, Inasmuch as the omniscient Ruler of the world, who, at one glance, sees all things, past, present, and future, must have well known that in the 19th century nations professing Christianity, from their luxurious and warlike habits and propensities, persevered in during many centuries, would be totally unfit to propagate the Gospel of Peace among Gentile nations—That, in fact, instead of being fitted for that sacred office, they them-

selves would require to be converted, and instructed in the Gospel of Peace. Knowing these things, an all-wise Ruler could never make choice of any of those nations to preach the *Gospel of Peace*. Whereas the Jews, disciplined in the school of adversity—the school of wisdom—made perfect through sufferings, would, on the contrary, be peculiarly fitted for this high and holy office.

Leaving to your Grace, to Mr. F., and to learned commentators on the prophecies to decide on the justness of the remark I have ventured to add to those of Mr. F., I would take the liberty of suggesting that the signs of the times wonderfully agree with this remark. The Jews are rapidly emerging from that state of degradation in which they have been so long held; and their rapid improvement in moral and political consequence affords to philanthropists a rational hope that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth will finally be blessed; and that at no very remote period. When these glorious prophecies concerning Christianity shall be fulfilled; and fulfilled they must be, if there is any truth in Christianity; then will our religion be founded on a rock; the great, the main link in the chain of prophecy concerning it will be supplied, and war, vice, and scepticism, hitherto inseparable companions, will be banished from the earth; the sword will fall harmless from the grasp of the warrior, and he will cease to learn war.

The remarks of Mr. Faber, my Lord, appear little likely to make converts of the Jews: to all he has said, and to all he can say, will they not reply, in the

words of Zechariah? "Our Messiah, when he comes, will establish a system of mercy, and peace, and kindness upon earth; while among you, Christians, nothing but disputes, animosities, and cruelties, mark your passage through the world." * * * * And, after speaking of the predicted blessings under the reign of the Messiah, he asks, "Has this happy period, this golden era of public peace and private love, ever yet been witnessed? Speak candidly, Christian! has it been once seen through a lapse of 1800 years?" *

Mr. Faber, in the passage I have quoted from his sermon evidently considers himself as a *reclaimed* Gentile; and, in the same light, he considers the Church, of which he is a benevolent and distinguished member. Here, my Lord, a question of high importance to philanthropists, and lovers of Christian truth arises—Where are reclaimed Gentile nations to be found? Reclaimed, I mean to the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the Gospel of Peace. For no other Gospel deserves the name. Such nations, my Lord, are not to be found in Europe; they appear to be "all gone astray like lost sheep." They all indeed pray for peace; but they all practise war. Even their nobles make it a trade to live by. To no nation in Europe can the prophecies quoted by Mr. Faber relating to the Messiah's kingdom, be applied with the least regard to truth and consistency. So far from agreeing in every particular with the event to which they are supposed to relate,

* I shall have occasion, in a subsequent letter, to show that during the greater part of the two first centuries Christians steadily refused to bear arms under any circumstances.

agreeably with Mr. Fabers' canon, they are in direct variance therewith. From this dilemma prophecy relieves us. It informs us that prior to the glories of the Messiah's reign, *darkness should cover the earth and gross darkness the people* (Isaiah lx. 1.) Agreeably herewith, St. Paul tells us, that "The day of Christ shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thes. ii. 3. 4.) and the same apostle tells us that "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. iii. 1-4.) Although in private life we find, in various sects of Christians, many delightful and splendid proofs to the contrary, yet these apostolic predictions apply with great force to all warlike nations. In all these the man of sin is revealed. Warlike princes and nations suspend the divine laws, and substitute their own. They exalt themselves above all that are called Gods. And, my Lord, do we not live in perilous times? And are not all such princes and nations covetous, boasters, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy? Are they not without natural affection, truce

breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God? And here, my Lord, with deference, but with grief I would ask, Have not the clergy, the soldiers of the prince of Peace, deserted their lawful sovereign, by proclaiming to the world, that his subjects may lawfully fight and wear weapons when called upon by the magistrate to do so? In a word, my Lord, are not all the nations of Europe worshippers of Mammon rather than of Jehovah? Have they not been so for many centuries? Has not the falling away, as regards nations, been general?

Allowing these prophecies of the Apostle to be in present operation, we arrive at the conclusion that the evidences in favour of the Messiahship of Jesus receive confirmation from the present suspension of his holy, and pacific religion. When the Christian prophecies are thus taken in connexion with the Jewish, they unfold a body of prophetic evidence better calculated to conciliate the Jews than the system of Mr. Faber, and other commentators.

The systems of other writers of the established church are equally unlikely to conciliate either Jews, Mahommedans, pagans, or deists. The late Bishop Watson thus expresses himself. "I am persuaded that when the spirit of Christianity shall exert its proper influence over the minds of individuals, and especially over the minds of public men constituting the councils of princes, whence are the issues of peace and war—when this happy period shall arrive, war will cease throughout the whole Christian world." To such re-

marks, will not Jews and unbelievers reply, "Physician heal thyself?" Shew, by thy practice, that thou art a believer in the Gospel of Peace, and then we will examine the truth of thy arguments. "Pull out the beam that is in thine own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit."

There is, no doubt, my Lord, much common-place truth in the remarks of this learned prelate; but, When is such a time likely to arrive? It will, my Lord, arrive when the spirit of Christianity shall exert its proper influence over the minds of the middle and lower classes; when the bulk of mankind shall become Christians; when they shall imbibe the spirit of Christians; for without this, whatever name they may assume, they are not Christians. (Rom. viii. 9.) When the great bulk of mankind shall be converted to the Gospel of Peace; then will *public men constituting the councils of princes*, and princes themselves will cease to learn war. War will then, if I may so say, die a natural death. Like a lamp deprived of oil, the flame of war will cease.

In planting Christianity, or the Gospel of Peace, the supreme and all-wise Ruler of the world did not avail himself of the aid of *public men constituting the councils of princes*. The apostle tells us that God selected men of an opposite character, and that "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called; but God hath chosen the

foolish things of the world, to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty :” (1 Cor. i. 26-27.) Arguing from analogy, Is it not, my Lord, I would respectfully ask, highly probable that, in reviving the Gospel of Peace, which, alas, has been long, very long in a state of abeyance, the wise Ruler of the world will be guided by a similar selection? And where, my Lord, could this be made so properly as in the Jewish nation? This wonderful event seems pointed out to us by prophecy with almost as much clearness and distinctness as future historians shall be able to relate it.

The prophet Isaiah (ch. lx. 1-5,) says, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together; and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged: because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.”

The prophet Zechariah (ch. viii. 20-23.) expresses himself with no less clearness, on this interesting subject. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts: It shall yet come to pass that there shall come people, and the

inhabitants of many cities : and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying ; Let us go up speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts : I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts : In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying : We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

The expressions *many people*, and *strong nations*, seem to allude directly to the present potent nations of Europe ; for, what nations, in point of strength, can be put in competition with them ? From these, and other similar passages of the prophecies, it seems more than probable that not only the future elevation of the Jews is here predicted, but also the consequent degradation of the *many people*, and *strong nations*. All these, we may infer, either in moral or political science, or in both, will look up to the long despised Jews for guidance and direction. Mr. Faber, and other orthodox commentators, in common with him, consider themselves already as *reclaimed Gentiles*, and that these prophecies do not apply to them. The expressions used by both prophets, are, however, very sweeping and comprehensive : the prophet Isaiah says, "*Behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people :*" and the prophet Zechariah says, "*Yea many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.*"

The darkness is to be general ; it is to *cover the earth* : we find no mention of reclaimed Gentiles being excepted. All these *many people*, and *strong nations*, have yet to be converted to the Gospel of Peace ; for to this Gospel they are, as yet, aliens. If not, my Lord, how stands the prophetic account ? Is it not this ? That, the unconverted Gentiles, viz. the heathen and pagan nations, are by the Jews to be converted to the Gospel of the Messiah, whilst the orthodox, the *reclaimed* Gentiles, are to remain in *statu quo* ; and continue to fight their sanguinary battles to the end of time !

Leaving the consideration of these, and other important matters, to your Grace, and other learned men,

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER VI.

ON THE CAUSES OF WAR.

Most Reverend Sir,

Having, I trust, shown the unlawfulness, or rather the sinfulness of war ; having shewn that it is destructive of our present, as well as our future and eternal hopes and interests ; I propose intruding still further upon your Grace, and shall endeavour, by pointing out a few of the causes and evils of war, and other matters connected with the subject, to render these truths, if possible, more obvious ; and to show that it is not only the duty, but the happiness of man, to refrain from engaging in it.

The causes of war, my Lord, may be divided into two classes, the alleged, and the real. It is not my intention to enlarge upon the former, but I beg to offer a few remarks concerning it. History informs us that nations have been cheated into wars by ambitious princes and unprincipled statesmen ; that the interests of the many have been sacrificed for the benefit of the few. Covetousness, jealousy, and a blind thirst for military fame, acting upon minds unoccupied by cor-

rect religious principles, have blinded the understandings of both princes and subjects to their real interests; and rendered them not only willing, but ambitious, to shed the blood of their brethren. They even seem to consider the work of human slaughter as one of the most honourable of all employments; and are as desirous to excel in the art, as if the honour of God, their duty to him, and their own salvation, depended on their military prowess. Not a few, like the Mahommedans, believe that if slain in battle, their passport to heaven is certain.

With minds inflamed and irritated by artful manifestoes, and by the specious harangues of statesmen, priests, and public orators, Christians, instead of being ready to forgive injuries, and thus obtain the friendly offices of other nations, agreeably to the dictates of religion and true policy, frequently, for a trifling offence, demand instant satisfaction; with probably a threat, that, if not conceded, it will be enforced. What is called national honour, is, on no account to be sacrificed; and the risk of ruin is to be hazarded rather than an insult forgiven. Thus nations are deluded into war; and war, when once begun, is generally continued, till want of men, or money, compels one or both of the parties to give up the sanguinary contest; and generally, without either party obtaining satisfaction.

How far Dean Swift's summary of the reasons which plunge nations into war may be correct, I leave to your Grace to determine.

"Sometimes (*says the Dean*) the ambition of princes,

who never think they have land enough to govern. Sometimes the corruption of ministers, who engage their masters in war, in order to stifle or divert the clamour of their subjects against their evil administration. Difference of opinion has cost many millions of lives.”—“Sometimes the quarrel between two princes is to decide which of them should dispossess a third of his dominions, where neither of them pretends to any right. Sometimes one prince quarrels with another, for fear another should quarrel with him. Sometimes our neighbours want the things we have, or have the things which we want: and so both fight till they take ours, or we theirs.

“It is a very justifiable cause of war (says the Dean) to invade a country after the people have been wasted by famine, destroyed by pestilence, or embroiled by factions among themselves. It is justifiable to enter into war against our nearest ally, where one of his towns lies convenient for us, or a territory of land that would render our dominion round and compact.

“If a prince sends forces into a nation where the people are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to death, and make slaves of the rest, in order to civilize them, and reduce them from their barbarous way of living. It is a very kingly and honourable practice, when one prince desires the assistance of another to secure him against invasion, that the assistant, when he has driven out the invader, should seize the dominions himself, and kill, imprison, or banish the prince he came to relieve.”

How far any, or all of these causes stated by the

very reverend Dean, may be true—how far they agree with real history, I leave to your Grace to determine ; and proceed to the real causes of war. These, whether moral or physical, are as lamentable as they are tremendous.

1. Among the numerous and direct causes of war, the most inveterate, and, from its long continuance, the most difficult to be removed, is the delusion that it is lawful for Christians—for the subjects of the Prince of Peace, to engage in it, and even to make it a trade to live by in times of peace : that “ it is lawful for them, when called upon by the magistrate, to wear weapons, and to serve in the wars.” That it is not only sinless, but praise-worthy for Christians to dedicate themselves to the profession of arms. This prejudice, with some noble exceptions to the contrary, has existed in the world for more than sixteen centuries. I call it prejudice, my Lord, because I think every thing which plainly contradicts the united voice of reason and revelation, deserves no better name. That this is the case with respect to war, I trust I have already demonstrated in the preceding letters.

So long as princes shall be taught by the ministers of religion—the servants of the Prince of Peace, that they possess the inherent, the divine right of making war ; so long as young men of family and fashion, shall be volunteers in the service ; so long as parents of the upper and wealthy classes of society, blinded by pride or avarice, shall avail themselves of this profession, as a convenient way of providing for the younger branches

of their families, with little expense, and divested of the vulgarity of trade ; so long will nations remain subject to all the evils, the vices, and the enormities arising from war. Is not war, my Lord, the real cause of the privations and miseries of the labouring classes ? Is it not the cause of the difficulties and dangers which threaten the rich with revolution ?

All the Christian nations of Europe, whether of the Greek, the Roman, or the Protestant persuasions, have concurred in supporting this destructive illusion ; and priests from each, appointed for the express purpose of giving a sanction to the slaughter of their brethren ; priests ordained, and consecrated to this office, by Archbishops, or Bishops, the representatives, in a direct line, from the Apostles of the Prince of Peace !!!

Our blessed Lord, and only master in matters pertaining to religion, says, " Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." St. Paul, already quoted, says to much the same purport ; " Avenge not yourselves ; but rather give place unto wrath ; for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink ; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Sentiments similar to these pervade the whole of the Gospel of Peace. In the New Testament, union and harmony, prevail ; not a word of war or slaughter is breathed. The commands of Christ, regarding the

avenging of injuries and insults, seem altogether irreconcilable with the licence of established churches to fight when called upon by the magistrate. When the systems are contrasted they appear to be as contrary to each other, as light and darkness, as truth and falsehood, as Christianity and paganism, as peace and war. No greater insult can be offered to Christ, no greater libel upon his holy religion, than to maintain that his disciples may be warriors. In its consequences, its evils have far exceeded those of all the heresies, and false doctrines, that have sprung up from the days of the apostles to the present time. The evils of Chartistism, Socialism, Owenism, are evils upon a minor scale. Though greatly to be deprecated, they are only temporary, and from their absurdity, and the insignificance of their patrons, would die away and cease of themselves. But not so the great legalised cause of war: it has been in full operation for sixteen centuries, and may be considered as the main cause of the wars that have, during this long period, desolated, and demoralized the world. So long as this delusion shall remain, the sword will not cease to devour.

And here, my Lord, I would pause and respectfully ask your Grace, and the clergy subordinate to you: What greater concession could the most sanguinary despot require, whether Christian, Jew, Mahommedan, or Pagan, from an obsequious clergy than the declaration, that, when summoned by him, they may with impunity disobey the commandments of God—that they may slaughter all his enemies? Can any declaration of a large and influential body of men, like the

clergy of the established church, be more likely to produce the heroic spirit, the bane of every thing noble, and holy, and good, and the parent of all the interminable wars, and the dreadful evils attending them, which have, for so many ages disgraced Christianity? The time may arrive, would that it were far distant, when the ministers of religion will have to lament that they have neglected to impress upon mankind the sacredness of human life, and the dreadful sin of taking it away. Had they not done so, they would have much less to fear from external wars, or, what is far more to be dreaded, internal commotions. For where rulers transgress the laws of God, is it not to be expected that subjects will do the same when they find, or fancy they find, their interests neglected? This, my Lord, brings me to what I consider as the next great cause of war, education.

II. Education, my Lord, may be divided into two classes ; school and religious education.

I regret to say that both these are framed to lead men astray from the paths of humility and peace ; or rather to cherish the heroic character ; which, as I have before observed, on the authority of Dr. Paley, is the very reverse of the Christian. If we try these systems by the rule of Solomon, " Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it : " or, if we try them by the rule of our Saviour, " By their fruits ye shall know them ; " they will both be found to lead us astray from the paths of security. To begin with school education.

Education, as at present generally conducted, instead

of forming the Christian character, is far more likely to form a character on a Grecian or Roman model ; for as soon as the understanding is sufficiently matured, the mind is saturated with classical lore. It becomes the foundation-stone of education, and establishes, what most parents, blinded by classical prejudices, wish their children to attain ; viz. the heroic character—the very hot-bed of war and bloodshed. This latter, according to the same accute observer, “possesses vigour, firmness, resolution ; is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities, jealous in its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purpose, violent in its resentment.” Such, my Lord, is the foundation of the education of all men intended to fill high stations, whether in the senate, at the bar, or in the pulpit. Soame Jennings, contrasting the Christian with the heroic character, says, “ If the former were universal the world would become a society of friends. Whereas, if the other disposition were universal, it would produce a scene of universal contention.” The history of the present times sadly displays the correctness of these remarks. I would here, with all due deference, ask your Grace, if you do not think it quite as possible, by education, to form one of these characters as the other. I would also respectfully ask, if the Gospel of Christ is not the best book that ever was written—the best that can be written, to show the weakness and the wickedness of the heroic character ; the general character of our great men.

This melancholy system of education commences in our earliest years ; even in the nursery, drums and

swords are favourite play things ; and children acquire a love for military fame, and military heroes ; and often connect therewith a hatred for Frenchmen and Spaniards ; and not uncommonly a rancorous hatred for Papists, and Presbyterians. How far these feelings may prevail among the ministers of the established church, I would respectfully leave to your Grace to decide. Little pains are taken, in after-life, to correct the antichristian impressions imbibed in our youth : on the contrary, they are generally permitted to grow with our growth, to strengthen with our strength, and frequently to acquire absolute dominion over us in the advanced stages of life. In the present rage for classical literature, the seeds of Christianity, I fear, may often be said to fall among thorns. As soon as a youth enters one of our classical, or fighting schools, the small stock of Christian principles which he may happen to carry there, is liable to be choked with classical thorns, or weeds, and the Christian character to merge in the heroic. How far the evil is amended by college education, I leave to your Grace, the church, the senate, and the bar to determine. Do any of these, my Lord, aim at the *Christian* character ?

To suit the prevailing taste of our own country ; to hope for wealth or honour, a classical foundation must be laid. If we examine the orations that are held in the highest repute, whether in the senate, or at the bar, the standard of their excellence is their conformity to classical models. To be admired, an orator should speak, and think, classically ; and should any expression escape him, where scriptural phrases, or ideas, are

introduced, it is considered as a certain proof of bad taste. We have, it must be admitted, splendid examples of individuals uniting the meek and pacific spirit of Christianity, with the highest classical attainments ; but may we not consider these as exceptions to a rule nearly general ? Can we, indeed, suppose it likely that where our ideas, and our modes of expressing them, are borrowed from Greece and Rome, that our hearts and minds will not very generally correspond to these ideas ? Can we expect that the professed admirers of the heroes of Homer, will be the sincere and humble followers of Jesus ? Then may we expect that young men educated at Oxford or Cambridge, will practise forgiveness of injuries and insults.

When, my Lord, it is considered that most of the greatest statesmen of Europe, during many ages, have been educated in classical, or fighting seminaries, and that a similar education is necessary for princes and legislators ; and that many of these have finished their education in camps and fleets, we need no longer wonder at the sanguinary, and anti-christian codes of laws established in many nations ; nor can we wonder at our own heterogeneous code which disqualifies those who slaughter animals, for the use of man, to sit as jurors, whilst it permits those whose trade is to slaughter men, to sit as Christian legislators. Some of these, my Lord, though evincing the very highest degree of physical or animal courage, have shewn themselves wanting in moral, or Christian courage. They have betrayed an abject fear of man, but a total disregard of the fear of God. They have been unable to with-

stand the finger of scorn pointed by mortals like themselves! In this number we find the great names of Pitt and Wellington enrolled; men appointed to make laws for others, setting at defiance the laws established by the great Legislator of heaven and earth; whose laws are just and holy. Would to God that Erasmus had arisen from his grave to rebuke them; for, alas! my Lord, no good Samaritan among our religious dignitaries was to be found to fulfil the friendly office. Nor is this to be wondered at when it is considered that all men filling high offices, have been educated in the same Roman way; and have been taught to venerate the laws of nations, the *lex talionis*, or an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: the very law that Jesus himself annulled. Nor need we wonder that men thus educated have never advocated the unpopular, or anti-classical doctrine of non-resistance, and patient endurance of evils; or that some of them should have even become the open and avowed advocates of war. Rather may we be astonished that, after the long triumphs of war, they should entertain any respect for the Gospel of peace. I fear, my Lord, that the number of the subjects of the Prince of Peace, is not large, either at Oxford or Cambridge; and that St. Peter, or St. Paul, should they apply for admission to holy orders, would be rejected, from not being able to subscribe to the articles of faith, established and upheld by fighting legislators.

The early delusions and antichristian principles imbibed in the nursery, at school, and at college, to which I have already alluded, so far from being dispelled by

by reading and adult education, are generally increased at every stage of knowledge. The grave historian, the poet, the dramatist, male and female, point out the profession of arms, as the path to honour and glory. Had the *Great Unknown* bent the almost supernatural powers of his mind, to promote "Peace on earth," instead of devoting them to the amusement of mankind, his name might be hailed as a blessing to the whole Christian world. But even grave divines, instead of leading their flocks in the paths of peace, have, in our own days, sounded the *toscin* of war ; and, like Napoleon, have recommended active war as the only sure path to lasting peace.

In looking forward, with the eye of faith, to the glorious prospects, which Christianity, on the testimony of prophecy, is destined to accomplish ; and in comparing this prophetic history, with the blood-stained pages of real history, whether ancient or modern, we are unavoidably led to the conclusion that there must have been something fundamentally wrong in the systems of religious education in all countries denominated Christian ; which, my Lord, brings me to the consideration of the effects produced by religious education.

Here, I would humbly ask your Grace, What fruit, as regards "Peace on earth," the end of Christ's mission, has the Church of Rome produced ? The answer is, None. What fruit has the Greek church produced ? None. What fruit has the Protestant church produced ? None. In all these, war has prevailed. May we not then, my Lord, on the same rule laid down by our

Saviour, pronounce that the tree, as it regards education, is corrupt, and, therefore, that it cannot bring forth good fruit? Alas! my Lord, that in the nineteenth century, the professors of Christianity, instead of being united as brethren; as fellow subjects of the Prince of Peace; as worshippers of the same true God; as children of the same benevolent parent, are as disunited as pagans; as worshippers of many deities. Even the sacerdotal orders, instead of living in union and harmony, as brethren—as worshippers of one God—are split into an innumerable diversity of sects and *castes*; and, in every country of Europe, the priesthood set at defiance the plain and express directions of their supreme head and ruler. I would particularly refer your Grace to Matt. xxiii. 8-10. and John xiii. 13-15. Can we, my Lord, wonder at the want of obedience to the laws of Christ, by persons in the humble walks of life, whilst their superiors openly transgress these laws? instead of making their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

Not only the thirty-seventh article of the established church, to which I have already solicited the attention of your Grace, but other parts of the Liturgy have a tendency to draw men aside from the paths of peace. One of the positive duties of a Christian is to imitate his Creator in acts of mercy and forgiveness; “To be merciful, even as he is merciful.”—“To be perfect, even as he is perfect.” Now, my Lord, some parts of the Liturgy * lead us to the belief that God does not,

* See the Prayer of Consecration in the Communion Service.

like the Father of the prodigal son, pardon us merely upon our sorrow, and repentance of our sins ; but that, in order to our forgiveness, he expects “ *a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation ;*” which satisfaction Jesus Christ made to him, by voluntarily laying down his life. It is therefore urged that, as God, the God of all mercy, does not pardon without full satisfaction being made to Him ; and, it being the duty of Rulers to imitate God, they also are bound to insist upon satisfaction before they pardon offenders. Concerning the duty of rulers, I pretend not to offer an opinion ; but concerning the duty of individuals, in their private capacities, the rule is plainly laid down by our Saviour. When asked by the apostle Peter, “ Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? till seven times ? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times ; but until seventy times seven.” That is, the forgiveness of individuals is to know no limit. When individuals shall imbibe this spirit—when men shall act on this principle, Rulers will be unable to procure men to engage in the work of vengeance ; and wars will cease.

Closely connected with the subject of education is the dangerous dogma that, in matters pertaining to religion, men are not permitted to use their reason, as on common occasions. This, my Lord, has long been the custom in popish countries ; the secret whereby the priesthood have kept up their rule and dominion ; but it has of late crept into the reformed churches. These, not having reason on their side, have, as is usual in such cases, availed themselves of the common

arms of invective and abuse, designating those who venture to use the reason that God has given them, as men who, loving rather to question than learn, have approached the oracles of divine truth without that humble docility, that prostration of the understanding and will, which are indispensable to Christian truth. Alas! my Lord, that in the nineteenth century, when science and learning of every other kind are making rapid strides in improvement, theology, the noblest of all studies, should retrograde and carry us back to those ages, when "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Alas! my Lord, that in this advanced state of Christianity, we should be taught that the glorious *Luminary* given to man to distinguish him from the irrational part of the creation, should be held up as something worse than useless. That, instead of being placed on a candlestick, it should be put under a bed, or under a bushel. Identifying "Peace on earth" with the religion of the Messiah, I must consider every thing that renders this religion mysterious, or doubtful, as necessarily promoting scepticism, one of the greatest enemies of the Gospel. The greatest foes of the Prince of Peace appear to be those of his own household.

Many of the causes of war remain yet to be noticed, but I must confine my remarks to a few. Among these standing armies occupy a prominent station. By causing jealousy and rivalry between nations, they have a more powerful tendency to promote war than to maintain peace. As long as these armies remain, there must be work found for them, and wars must be fre-

quent. The expences attending these are so great that their recurrence must, of necessity, become less frequent. This has, no doubt, been one of the unavoidable effects of our immense national debt.

One of the great causes of war arises from these standing armies creating a new trade, or the profession of arms, as it is generally called. By it the parents of the middle, and even the highest classes of society, have an interest in promoting or continuing war, as it enables them to place their sons in stations where they may establish themselves in the world without the aid of capital, and divested of the vulgarity of trade and commerce. These, my Lord, form a large and influential part of society, for there are few families of wealth, or rank, that have not either relatives, or near connexions, in the navy or army. Is it not lamentable that all these should be placed in situations to wish for that which is destructive to society, to religion, and general happiness? At the conclusion of a war, hundreds of young men aspiring to promotion, feelingly lament that the contest was not continued a little longer, that they might have attained a higher grade in their profession, or a superior rate of half-pay to retire upon : although the attainment might have cost their country thousands of lives, and millions of national treasure ! That army-agents, army-contractors, army-tailors, cannon-founders, gun-makers, cutlers, and various other *craftsmen*, should incite men to war, may be accounted for on the very same principle that the silversmiths of Ephesus contended for the worship of the great goddess Diana. War, my Lord, brings no small profit to

the *craftsmen* I have enumerated ; for it is by war they have their wealth. This conduct, my Lord, seems not unnatural in men who, like the Ephesians, were worshippers of Diana : but that Christian princes, and nobles, with their sons, should receive pay for fighting their own battles—for protecting their own estates, seems not easy to account for. They may indeed excuse themselves on the plea that the profession of arms is not only sanctioned by the national church, but that the ministers of the church set the example by sending their sons into the army and navy ; and not a few of them have thereby attained the highest honours and rank their sovereign, or country, could confer. It seems difficult, my Lord, to account for this strange dereliction of duty on any other principle than, that when men once depart from the plain precepts of revealed religion, their hearts insensibly become “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

The apostle James (ch. iv. 1.) has, in a few words, stated to us the main causes of war. “From whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members ?” Here, my Lord, war is tacitly condemned, inasmuch as it proceeds from an unholy cause : it proceeds from those lusts, or pleasures, which the Gospel condemns. Knowing the cause, we ascertain the cure—the only certain cure for any evil, moral or physical. The question then to be asked is merely this, Can the causes, that is the lusts which produce war, be conquered ? Can men, through a systematic course of education.

and discipline, be cured of pride, envy, hatred, malice, covetousness? The answer often given to this important question is that these propensities have been inherent in us ever since the fall of Adam, and can alone be overcome by the Grace of God. We must be born again. Here, my Lord, another question meets us; Has not the Grace of God—the superabundance of his goodness, been already largely bestowed upon us in the Gospel of his Son? In the latter part of the sermon on the mount, do we not find ample directions for subduing those pugnacious lusts from whence wars arise? and, as if to take away from us all excuse, has not God, of the abundance of his Grace, sent to us his beloved Son to be our example and guide? Can we reasonably expect a larger portion of his Grace? Can we expect a miracle in our favour? That God will bestow upon us his Grace, in such measure as to compel our obedience, whether we will or not?

The last cause of war which I propose to mention to your Grace ought, perhaps, from its great power and importance, to have had earlier notice. It is scepticism: a belief either that the Christian revelation is altogether false; or else that the glorious promises there held out to us will not be fully realized, or that the threatened punishments will be fully inflicted. Did men believe in these things as realities, they must be worse than idiots in not paying the most implicit obedience to the commands of God. To what other cause can we, with an equal probability of arriving at the truth, attribute the prevalence of war? And, my Lord,

as our holy religion, in passing through Roman vessels; has adopted the Roman doctrine, (for such it is) that it is lawful for Christians "to wear weapons and to serve in the wars," Is it not highly probable that, in passing through the same polluted channel, the pure and simple doctrines of the religion of Jesus may have received similar contamination? Is it not probable that whilst the practices of Christians have become Romanised, that their doctrines should partake of the same character? I need not inform your Grace that men distinguished for piety, learning, and integrity have, after diligent examination, arrived at this conclusion. In this number, my Lord, I think I may without presumption place that acute logician, Dr. Paley. In the dedication of his *Moral Philosophy* to Bishop Edmund Law, he speaks of recovering "the simplicity of the Gospel from beneath the load of unauthorised additions which the ignorance of some ages and the learning of others, the superstition of the weak and the craft of designing men have (unhappily for its interests) heaped upon it." This brings me, in conclusion, to say a few words concerning the means of eradicating this overwhelming evil.

Various plans have been devised by philanthropists to remove this parent of many evils. Among other methods a Congress of Nations has been suggested by our transatlantic brethren; and a large premium awarded to the writer of the best essay on this subject. Six of these essays, forming a large octavo volume, have been printed at the expense of the American Peace Society; and a copy is intended to be presented

to every sovereign, and every dignitary in church and state, in Europe. This, my Lord, by exhibiting to sovereigns and subjects the evils of war—its folly—its insanity—must secure to them the good wishes of all friends of peace. These essays are calculated to make us hate war ; but, whether they are likely to produce “peace on earth,” is another question. Permit me, my Lord, to say that, as far as I can judge, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, have, if I may be permitted the expression, written the very best essays on the unlawfulness of war : and I would humbly add, that the lovers of peace have *Moses* * and the prophets ; they have Jesus and the Apostles ; if they hear not them, neither will they be persuaded that war is unlawful, though one should rise from the dead.

The attempt to establish peace by means of legislation, seems equivalent to making men good by legislation. It seems like an attempt to convert the tree of religion, a tree which has hitherto produced war, into a tree that shall henceforth produce peace. This, my Lord, does not seem to agree with the plan laid down by our Saviour ; which is to make the tree good, if we would wish the fruit to be good. Neither does it agree with the teachings of prophecy on this subject. After making known to us the triumphs of the Messiah’s reign the prophet Isaiah (xi. 9.) assigns, as the cause of these triumphs ; “for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the *Lord*, as the waters cover the sea.” The first and great step, therefore, to be taken in order to establish permanent peace is to cultivate the know-

* See the preceding Letter, page 67—70, concerning the wars in Canaan.

ledge of the Lord, or the simplicity of the Gospel, and to clear it from the load of unauthorised additions, which have been heaped upon it. The establishment of peace, seems, therefore, to appertain to the priest, rather than to the legislator. Is it not then imperative upon the dignitaries of the church, throughout Europe, to set about establishing the simplicity of the Gospel? If, dismissing other guides, we take the Gospel for our rule, the path of duty becomes easy to us. A question proposed by our Lord, is much to our purpose. When (Mark xii. 29.) asked by the scribe, which is the first commandment of all? He answers, "The first of all commandments is, Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." From these words, and the conversation between our Saviour and the Scribe, it would seem clear that we have here a summary of our duty as Christians. From these words, also we learn what is our duty as *peaceable* Christians—to love our neighbour as ourselves. The message by the heavenly host, is equivalent. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." In those words we have the Gospel of peace, and we have the assurance of the prophet Isaiah (xxxv. 8.) that we cannot mistake it. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; and the unclean shall not pass over

it, but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not enter therein."

This, my Lord, is a consoling description of the Gospel of peace, in its native simplicity, divested of the unauthorised additions, which Dr. Paley laments. When this blessed Gospel shall be sincerely believed—when scepticism shall cease, the sword will cease to devour. Remove the cause, the dreadful evil will disappear.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER VII.

ON THE EVILS OF WAR.

Most Reverend Sir,

Considering the Gospel of Christ, as a system of religion, designed by the great Ruler of the world, not merely to render men virtuous and happy here, but, at the same time, to fit them for an eternity of happiness; and regarding war as destructive of every virtuous principle which the Gospel inculcates, we must contemplate its existence, though wisely ordered for our final good, as one of the greatest evils we have to contend with, in this our probationary state.

The evils occasioned by war may be divided into two classes, moral, and physical. The latter, though tremendous, may be considered as trifling when compared with the former; and nothing can be more just than the remark of our admirable female bard, that

“ War’s least horror is the ensanguined field.”

The laws of Omnipotence are so wisely and benevolently framed, that obedience to them may be considered as the road to happiness; and disobeying them, as the path to misery. Contemplating the evils

arising from war as correctional punishments, intended for our benefit, the ways of God may be considered to be as merciful as they are just: but to look upon wars as evils out of our power to remove; as evils happening in the usual course of God's providence, like storms and tempests, appears to be little short of gross impiety; as well as expressive of a disbelief in those prophecies which assure us that Christianity, or the *knowledge of the Lord*, will put an end to these evils. Before entering upon the moral evils of war, I propose briefly to notice some of its minor, or physical evils.

If, my Lord, we consider the number of men that are employed for the purposes of war to be merely so many human beings subtracted from the mass of mankind, and their labour, as to any useful purpose, lost to the world, the evil is one of no trifling magnitude; and its existence leads us to the humiliating conclusion, that men are either less wise, or less humane, than the brute creation. Estimating the average number of troops in Europe in time of war and peace, to amount to three millions; and for each of these individuals, reckoning the labour of two others, as probably necessary to support him in food, clothing, &c.; as well as to build and repair ships, construct forts, and perform other work connected with war. This will take away nine or ten millions of men, all in the prime and vigour of manhood, from all profitable labour. To this may probably be added the food and labour of a million of horses. Did the loss of all these procure for us general peace and safety, it would be the less to be regretted;

but, history tells us that standing armies, instead of preserving peace, have kept the world in a state of fever and irritation : and have rather been the means of provoking, than of extinguishing the horrors of war. It has provided for the rich and idle at the expense of the poor and industrious.

Mr. Burke, in his *Vindication of Natural Society*, says ; “ It is an incontestible truth, that there is more havoc made in one year by men, than has been made by all the lions, tigers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears, and wolves, since the beginning of the world ; though these agree ill enough with each other, and have a much greater proportion of rage and fury in their composition than we have.” The same eloquent writer also says ; “ The number of human beings who have been slain in battles, and have perished in a no less miserable manner, by the other destructive consequences of war from the beginning of the world, to the time at which he was writing, amounted to at least seventy times the number of souls on the globe !!! ”

The learned Dr. Johnson says ; “ It is wonderful with what coolness, and indifference the greater part of mankind see war commenced. Those that hear of it at a distance, or read of it in books, but have never presented its evils to their minds, consider it as little more than a splendid game, a proclamation, an army, a battle, and a triumph. Some, indeed, must perish in the most successful field ; but they die upon the bed

of honour ; resign their lives amidst the joys of conquest ; and, filled with England's glory, smile in death. The life of a modern soldier is ill represented in heroic fiction. War has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon and the sword. Of the thousands, and tens of thousands, that perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy. The rest languished in tents and ships amidst damps and putrefactions, gasping and groaning, unpitied and even made obdurate by long continuance of hopeless misery : and were at last whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without notice, and without remembrance. "By incommodious encampments, and unwholesome stations, where courage is useless, and enterprise impracticable, fleets are silently dispeopled, and armies sluggishly melted away."

The details of the French expedition into Russia, by Sir R. K. Porter, and Labaume, which I have noticed in my APOLOGY, present statements of the evils and horrors of war sufficient to congeal the blood. And, alas ! my Lord, the histories of our own campaigns contain details, at which every Englishman ought to blush, and hide his head. The following account of the storming of St. Sebastian, is extracted from *Blackwood's Magazine*.

"The enemy having reserved their fire till the head of our column had gained the middle of the stream, then opened with the most deadly effect. Grape, canister, musketry, shells, grenades, and every species of missile were hurled from the ramparts, beneath which,

our gallant fellows dropped like corn before the reaper; insomuch, that in the space of two minutes, the river was literally choked up with the bodies of the killed and wounded, over whom, without discrimination, the advancing divisions passed on."

After having, with great loss, established themselves within the walls of the city, the narrator continues. "As soon as the fighting began to wax faint, the horrors of plunder and rapine succeeded. Fortunately there were few females in the place; but of the fate of the few which were there, I cannot, even now, think without a shudder. The houses were every where ransacked, the furniture wantonly broken, the churches profaned, the images dashed to pieces; wine and spirit cellars broken open, and the troops, heated already with angry passions, became absolutely mad by intoxication. All order and discipline were abandoned. The officers had no longer the slightest control over their men, who, on the contrary, controlled the officers; nor is it by any means certain, that several of the latter did not fall by the hands of the former, when they vainly attempted to bring them back to a sense of subordination."

After describing the burning and plundering of the city during the night, and the brutality and intoxication of the troops, the narrator continues: "of these various noises, the greater number now began to subside, as night passed on; and long before dawn, there was a fearful silence. Sleep succeeded inebriety with the bulk of the army: of the poor wretches who groaned and shrieked three hours ago, many had expired; and the very fire had almost wasted itself, by consum-

ing every thing upon which it could feed. Nothing, therefore, could now be heard, except an occasional faint moan, scarcely distinguishable from the heavy breathing of the sleepers ; and even that was soon heard no more." "It is impossible to describe, with any degree of fidelity, the appearance which St. Sebastian presented, when the dawn of the first of September rendered objects visible. The streets which had lately been covered with the living as well as the dead, were now left to the occupation of the latter ; and these were so numerous, that it puzzled the beholder to guess where so many sleeping men could have found room to lie. The troops, however, returned not, with the return of light, to their accustomed state of discipline. Their strength being recruited, and their senses restored, they applied themselves, with greater diligence than ever, to the business of plunder. Of the houses, few remained, except in a state of ruin ; but even the ruins were explored with the most rapacious eagerness, not so much for the jewels and other valuables, as for wine and spirits."

I cannot, my Lord, take my leave of these painful and disgraceful transactions, without asking you, if it is possible for those who acknowledge that God is merciful as well as just and wise, and that He watches over the affairs of the world, to believe that any nation can be in a state of permanent safety which depends on a military force ? To imagine this, seems no less than to libel and defame, the wisdom, the mercy, the justice of God. But, my Lord, a time is yet in reserve for

the world, when poets need no longer sing the plaintive strains of our peaceful bard,

“————— my ear is pained
 My soul is sick with every day's report
 Of wrong and outrage with which the earth is filled,
 There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
 It does not feel for man :
 Then what is man ? And what man seeing this,
 And having human feelings, does not blush
 And hang his head to find himself a man ?”

Oh, my Lord that all our poets, like Cowper ; and our priests, like Erasmus, would “labour for peace.”

The miseries, the calamities and the vices of the late war, recorded as they have been by eye witnesses, and these men of science, virtue, and humanity, seem peculiarly calculated, in a reading age like the present, to produce in the minds of thinking men of the military profession; a loathing and abhorrence of war. Mr. Edgeworth says ;

“ Martial enthusiasm, and a philosophic, humane love of peace, are incompatible ; therefore military pupils should not be made philosophers, else they cease to be soldiers, and then how can we be defended ? An officer can no more be certain of never being called upon to fight in an unjust cause, than a lawyer can be certain that he will never be obliged to plead on the wrong side of the question.”

Mr. Edgeworth, my Lord, writes more like a politician and a man of the world, than a christian philosopher ; and the latter has the solid consolation of knowing that the world is under the protection of superior

wisdom ; and a time is in reserve for us when "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid.—And they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

I turn now, my Lord, to the moral evils of war: these, alas? are still more tremendous than those which I have faintly described. The world has been so long familiar with war and vice, that it seems difficult to ascertain which is the cause, and which the effect: they appear to have produced, and reproduced each other, with little intermission for a succession of ages. From history we gather, that vicious nations have uniformly been addicted to war ; and warlike nations to vice. If, therefore, the ministers of the Prince of Peace can preach down war, they will shut one of the great flood-gates that has deluged the world with vice ; or if they can preach down vice, they will do much towards banishing from the world one of the greatest evils with which its supreme Ruler has seen fit to afflict it.

War, my Lord, as far as regards those concerned in it, does much, if I may be permitted the expression, to unchristianise its votaries ; by striking at the root of the sympathy and affection, which, for the wisest and best of purposes, our gracious Creator has implanted between the two sexes. This delightful sympathy, calculated to exalt and dignify our nature, if not destroyed, is, in a great degree, weakened by living in camps and fleets. We are informed on high authority,

that “*In the beginning God made them male and female; and said, for this cause a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”

Where this sympathy and affection are cultivated; or, in other words, where marriage is held sacred, peace and happiness will be found, whether by nations or individuals; and, on the other hand, misery and vice will as generally result from the breach of this first law of Omnipotence. I shall, therefore, instead of descanting generally on the evils of war, confine myself chiefly to those which spring from the breach, or neglect, of the sacred ordinance of marriage. If I can show, which I think it will not be difficult for me to do, that war directly interferes with this institution, and that, in many instances, it sets aside this “great expedient for maintaining the moral order and social happiness of mankind,” it may safely be affirmed, that, “if war does not cause, it aggravates every evil, moral or political, by which mankind is assailed.” Indeed, my Lord, the government of Omnipotence is so wisely framed that no single command of his can be transgressed without breaking down the sacred bounds of virtue. A celebrated philosopher, and moralist, (Dr. Franklin) observes, “That the virtues are all parts of a circle; whatever is humane is wise, whatever is wise is just, and whatever is wise, just, and humane, will be found to be the true interest of states.” They resemble a machine compounded of various wheels, remove one,

and the whole is destroyed. St. James, if I mistake not, expresses in still stronger terms the same truth ; “ Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point is guilty of all.” If from the Christian code we remove the institution of marriage—if we destroy or weaken its blessings, we destroy the whole structure of Christianity. This does war.

Permit me here to offer to your Grace a few remarks on the impressment of seamen as directly bearing on this subject : but before I enter upon it, I beg to say a few words on the characters and habits of seamen ; on which I believe, landsmen in general form very erroneous opinions.

Seamen, my Lord, are commonly considered as persons of vicious, idle, and thoughtless habits. This may be very true of them after being long employed in the naval service ; but their character is often the very reverse of this when they enter, or rather when they are dragged into it. Seamen, at least those who are regularly brought up as such, are early accustomed to habits of industry, and they quit them with regret. They are trained to a laborious trade, which, in common with other trades, holds out to them the cheering prospect, which most good men look forward to as essential to a high degree of earthly happiness ;—which is that, by good conduct, they may, in due time, be enabled to marry those they love, or afford support to aged or infirm parents. That men of these habits and views should, from a life of industry, be dragged into scenes of vice and debauchery, is deeply to be la-

mented. That they should be placed in situations likely to send them to their last dread account, "with all their sins upon their heads," is what you, my Lord, and every pious minister of Christ, must particularly deplore. But vice and misery must ensue from every system which interferes with the sacred institution of marriage; an institution cœval with the creation, and with which the custom of impressment is in direct hostility.

The eloquent advocate of the Negro slaves in the West Indies, in his *Appeal* on their behalf, says, "This cannot be surprising to any considerate mind. The supreme Ordainer of all things, in his moral administration of the universe, usually renders crime, in the way of natural consequences, productive of punishment; and it was surely to be expected that he would manifest, by some strong judicial sanction, his condemnation of practices, which are at war with the marriage institution, the great expedient for maintaining the moral order, and social happiness of mankind."

The seaman, my Lord, has long been treated by those very persons he protects, by nobles and legislators, as the off-scouring of society. The laws which afford protection to all other classes of subjects, hold out to him no protection. Alas! my Lord, that human laws should interfere with the laws of God: the sacred laws of justice, judgment and mercy, benefit not him: the stern law of state-necessity, occupies their place. The seaman, by impressment, is not only forced from his wife and family—from every thing that can render life desirable to him—but is sent, perhaps for a few

years, perhaps for life, without even being permitted to bid farewell to those most dear to him, to a distant, perhaps a sickly part of the globe : and this not merely to work, but to transgress one of the first principles of human nature—to fight and to kill those who have never injured him. If urged by humanity, or the all-powerful feelings of conjugal, or parental affection, he ventures in the hours of hopeless despair, to quit a situation into which he has been forced, he is **LIABLE TO SUFFER DEATH !** Pause, I entreat your Grace, as a peer of the realm, and as a legislator, to think on such a law, a law, which, if not enacted by your Grace, continues to receive your sanction. Is it possible, my Lord, that the successors of the Apostles of Jesus can have any hand in upholding so unrighteous a law ? When human laws thus run counter to the sacred laws of God, they necessarily produce the very evils they are intended to guard against : we kick against the pricks, and the advocates for impressment cannot surely expect, in the present advancing state of knowledge, that a custom infinitely more galling than feudalism, will endure for ages after the feudal system has disappeared. Impressment was suited to the barbarous times in which it originated—times when the commanders of our ships were about as ignorant as their crews now are. Can it reasonably be expected that when knowledge shall break the fetters imposed by ignorance, seamen will continue to fight for laws, or legislators, that afford them no protection in return ! For ages this has been the case !

That the present system is one of imminent danger cannot be doubted ; and no lover of his country can

look back to our naval history in 1797, to which I have before alluded, without entertaining a strong conviction that the safety of a nation, depending upon an armed force supplied by impressment, rests upon a sandy foundation. In that ever to be remembered year, the force which has for ages been considered as the bulwark of our national safety and honour, was nearly proving the cause of our absolute downfall. This ought never to be lost sight of by the advocates for impressment ; which, as it is the most wicked, is also one of the weakest parts of our present system of defence. It has already caused seamen, to expatriate themselves by thousands, and even fight against the ungrateful country that gave them birth. It has rendered them desperate and ferocious ; and, as outcasts of society, deprived of hope and protection from any laws, thousands of them have become fitted for piracy, or the very worst of crimes, as sad experience has proved. These crimes may, in no small degree, be traced to a disregard of the marriage institution. In speaking of the criminal intercourse between the sexes, Dr. Paley observes, " That it is a fact," however it is accounted for, " that it corrupts and depraves the moral character more than any single species of vice whatsoever." He adds, " These indulgences in low life are usually the first stages of men's progress to the most desperate villanies ; and in high life to that lamentable dissoluteness of principle which manifests itself in a profligacy of public conduct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and moral probity."

Standing armies are, like fleets, hostile to the mar-

riage institution, they place a large number of men out of the pale of civilized society ; rendering them pests, rather than safeguards to mankind. Deprived of the means of enjoying conjugal happiness, they become its real enemies ; and, instead of restoring females to virtue, and happiness, assist to support them in the paths of vice and profligacy. In the service of our country, even in time of peace, we have about one hundred thousand men, all in the prime, and vigour of manhood, placed in this situation. A large portion of them may probably be considered as an organized body of men *at war with the marriage institution*. I would here ask the admirers of Mr. Wilberforce, who so far from taking a decided part against war, was the steady friend of our warlike ministers ; whether a nation keeping so many young men in a state of celibacy, or something worse, we may not expect, that “ God will manifest, by some strong judicial sanction, his condemnation of a practice which is at war with the marriage institution ; the great expedient for maintaining moral order, and social happiness of mankind.”

The sin and profligacy consequent on a state warfare, are not extinguished by its cessation. The profligate, and wicked, whom it has nourished, are ejected from naval seaports and garrison towns, and serve to spread a moral contagion throughout the whole mass of organized society. To this cause may probably, in no small degree, be attributed the degeneracy, and consequent poverty of the lower classes of mankind, nor is the evil confined to them ; its baneful influence is extended to the rich and the noble ; for there are few of these

that have not sons, or relatives in the army or navy.

War may be considered as the bane of every thing great and good. To enumerate only a few of its evils, might fill a volume, instead of a letter. That it checks the reception of Christianity by the Jews, will appear from a paper signed, Zecher Lachorcan, a Jew of Falmouth, of which I sent your Grace a copy in a former Letter, (p. p. 97, 98.) That it opposes the spread of Christianity among the Hindoos, is equally probable. The Abbè Dubois, a veteran missionary, says ; "It is, I believe, a generally admitted fact, that the invasions, and conquests, which Europeans, prompted by avarice, and an inextinguishable thirst of dominion, have not ceased to make in the old and new world, during the last three centuries, have, in most cases proved rather a curse than a blessing ; and have, on the whole, produced more evil than good." The opinion of this zealous missionary is, that the Hindoos believe, that the natives of Europe have no religion at all : and they, it is certain, have some grounds for coming to this conclusion. Europeans distribute among them a book, containing the principles of a religion which teaches "Peace on earth ;" but from experience, they find that the natives of Europe, are far more addicted than themselves to fighting, rapine, plunder, and every thing that is forbidden in this book : and, as Europeans, hold, in equal contempt the Hindoo Shaster, Hindoos naturally conclude, that they have no religion at all.

It is, therefore, plain that the duty of every well-wisher to Christianity, whether minister or layman, Protestant or Catholic, Episcopalian or Presbyterian,

Arminian or Calvinist, Trinitarian or Unitarian, publicly to declare, that the religion he professes does not permit those who embrace it, to engage in war ; for he cannot in any other way, answer the arguments brought against it by Jews, Mohammedans, deists, and Hindoos. Though he may show that Christianity is superior in moral excellency to every religion ; though he may show that his own peculiar views of it are the very best ;—he cannot with consistency, say that it is the religion of which it was predicted by the prophet Isaiah (xxxii. 17.) that “ The work of righteousness shall be peace : and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever.”

Before I conclude this letter, permit me, my Lord, to show you that my opinions respecting the evils of war, so far from being singular, are in unison with the sentiments of some highly talented writers.

LORD CLARENDON says : “ War introduces and propagates opinions and practices, as much against heaven as against earth ; and it lays our natures, and our manners, as waste as our gardens and habitations ; and we can as easily preserve the beauty of the one, as the integrity of the other, under the cursed jurisdiction of drums and trumpets.”

ARCHBISHOP SECKER says : “ War not only weakens, and afflicts a community, but interrupts the freedom of commerce ; retards the propagation of knowledge ; prevents useful employments ; takes the public attention from domestic concerns ; furnishes occasions for abuses ;

obstructs the remedy of inconveniences, till they grow inveterate and hard to cure ; in short, disorders and unhinges the whole system of civil affairs. Every suffering thus caused, is a heinous crime, and every death a murder."

BISHOP PORTEUS, (though in advanced life, a defender of the military profession, as I shall hereafter state) in his beautiful poem on death, written in his early and less sophisticated days, when at College, says ;

"————— one murder made a villain,
Millions a hero,—Princes were privileged
To kill, and numbers sanctified the crime.
Ah, why will kings forget that they are men ?
And men that they are brethren ? Why delight
In human sacrifice ? Why burst the ties
Of nature, that should knit their souls together
In one soft bond of amity and love ?
Yet still they breathe destruction, still go on,
Inhumanly ingenious to find out
New pains for life, new terrors for the grave,
Artificers of death ! Still monarchs dream
Of universal empire growing up
From universal ruin.—Blast their design,
Great God of hosts ; nor let thy creatures fall,
Unpitied victims at ambition's shrine !"

As I shall hereafter have occasion to quote Bishop Porteus as one of the defenders of military heroes, I shall not now, my Lord, trouble you with any comments on the extract I have made from one of his early productions.

DR. CHANNING, with what truth I leave to your Grace and my readers to determine, says ; " The chief evil of war ! What is it ? What induces us to place

war at the head of human calamities? In replying to these questions, I shall not direct you to the physical sufferings of war, however great or terrible. Death in its most agonizing forms; the overthrow of proud cities; the devastation of fruitful fields; the impoverishing of nations; famine; pestilence; these form the train of victorious war. But these are not the distinguishing evils of war. These are inflictions of other causes much more than of war. Other causes are wasting human life and joy more than battles. Millions, indeed, die by the sword; but these millions are as nothing compared with the countless multitude who die by slow and painful disease. Cities are overthrown by earthquakes as well as by armies, and more frequently swept by accidental conflagrations than by the flames of war. Hostile bands ravage fields; but how much oftener do whirlwinds, storms, hurricanes rush over land and sea, prostrating harvests, and destroying the labours of years on a scale so vast, as to reduce human devastations to a narrow extent. The truth is, that man is surrounded with mighty powers of nature which he cannot comprehend or withstand; and amidst their beneficent operations, all of them inflict much suffering. What distinguishes war is, not that man is slain, but that he is slain, spoiled, crushed by the cruelty, the injustice, the treachery, the murderous hand of man. The evil is moral evil. War is the concentration of all human crimes. Here is its distinguishing, accursed brand. Under its standard gather violence, malignity, rage, fraud, perfidy, rapacity and lust. If it only slew men, it would do little.

It turns man into a beast of prey. Here is the evil of war, that man, made to be the brother, becomes the deadly foe of his kind ; that man, whose duty it is to mitigate suffering, makes the infliction of suffering his study and end ; that man, whose office it is to avert and heal the wounds which come from nature's powers, makes researches into nature's laws, and arms himself with her most awful forces, that he may become the destroyer of his race. Nor is this all. There is also found in war a cold-hearted indifference to human miseries and wrongs, perhaps more shocking than the bad passions it calls forth. To my mind, this contempt of human nature is singularly offensive. To hate expresses something like respect. But in war, man treats his brother as nothing worth ; sweeps away human multitudes as insects ; tramples them down as grass ; mocks at their rights ; and does not deign a thought to their woes.

" These remarks show us the great evil of war. It is moral evil. The field of battle is a theatre, got up at an immense cost, for the exhibition of crime on a grand scale. There the hell within the human breast, blazes out fiercely and without disguise. A more fearful hell in any region of the universe cannot well be conceived. There the fiends hold their revels, and spread their fury.

" To many, the physical evils of war are more striking than the moral. The outward impresses multitudes more than the inward. It is because they cannot look inward, because they are too earthly and sensual to see and comprehend the deformity of a selfish, unjust, ma-

lignant soul. The outward evils of life are emblems of the inward, and are light when severed from these. The saddest view of war is, that it is the breaking out of the human heart, revealing there what is more awful than the miseries which it inflicts. The death-groan is fearful ; but how much more appalling the spirit of murder which extorts it !”—*Lecture on war, by W. E. Channing.*

And now, my Lord, in closing the very limited view I have taken of the evils, physical and moral, arising from war, I would, with all due deference, but at the same time with the greatest earnestness, ask your Grace, Whom are we to regard as the authors and perpetrators of these intense evils whom a just and righteous God will call to account for the transgression of his sacred laws ? The answer to this heart-searching question seems plain and easy ; not only to Sovereigns and ministers of state ; not only to all admirals and generals, and the inferior officers serving under them, but to every private individual serving in fleets and armies the command is given, *Thou shalt do no murder!* Are not all these accountable and immortal beings ? Accountable as well as their superiors, for their actions ? Blessed, as well as them, with great and glorious hopes of reward for obedience ; and threatened with similar chastisements for disobedience. Shall such a noble being as man, made in the image of his great Creator ; and commanded to resemble him ; shall he regard himself as one of the brute creation ? Shall he degrade himself, or become a mere piece of machinery to be set a-going

at the pleasure of another? God has graciously given him, along with his revealed will, an understanding and conscience for his guides; and to these he is, at his peril, to attend. But, my Lord, does not the same kind of responsibility attach to those who indirectly promote war, as to those immediately engaged in it? And here, my Lord I would ask, Does not an awful responsibility attach to all ministers of the Prince of Peace?—those ministers who proclaim to the world, in the articles of their religion that Christian men may lawfully wear weapons, and serve in war, when sanctioned by the magistrate? Does not an awful responsibility attend all who are encouraging, or in any way abetting the dreadful evils resulting from war? And, my Lord, if Christian ministers of low rank are culpable in the sight of God, for giving their sanction to war; how much more criminal in the dignitaries of the church throughout Europe to compel those under them to assert that Christians may lawfully wear weapons and serve in war? Where, my Lord, can you find this written? From what part of the New Testament can you infer this?

We often hear from the ministers of religion of the immense value of the souls of men—souls committed to their care—yet, with the most perfect coolness and indifference the leaders of armies sit down to calculate how many lives must be sacrificed in order to take a fortress, or carry a point. This is done with the same regard to the value of souls, as post-masters pay in calculating how many years a post-horse will last when used in a particular kind of employment: and all this

without one friendly Erasmus, among the ministers of religion, to raise his voice in behalf of outraged humanity.

Permit me again, my Lord, in conclusion, to place before you the orders, or commands of our blessed Lord, "Ye have heard it said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, Resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Allow me, my Lord, with the bluntness of a seaman, to say that if military officers displayed the same kind of liberty in interpreting the orders of their superiors, that the ministers of Jesus do in obeying the commands of their Lord, they would soon be cashiered.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER VIII.

ARGUMENTS ADVANCED IN FAVOUR OF WAR.

Most Reverend Sir,

I turn now to the examination of the arguments generally used by theologians in defence of war, and the profession of arms. If the statements I have made to your Grace, concerning the causes, and evils of war, are true; or if they are so only in part, it might be expected that war, and military heroes, who take a prominent part in inflicting the evils of war, would have few defenders; at least among the humane, the enlightened, the virtuous—the CHRISTIAN part of mankind. I regret to say that this is not the case; and that, among the defenders of war, and the military profession, may be numbered such men as Bishop Porteus, and Dr. Paley—men whose humanity can be as little doubted as their learning and integrity.

If men like these, through error, or prejudice, fall into mistakes; if they happen to call evil good, and good evil; if such men happen to put light for darkness, or darkness for light, the mischief to society becomes incalculable; the latter, in particular, has acquired that

high character for sagacity, and integrity, that many accede to his decisions, with almost implicit obedience. It is, perhaps, to this ready and blind acquiescence in the opinions of others—the adopting opinions at second hand, prostrating instead of using our reason in the search after truth—the truth as it is in Jesus—it is perhaps owing to this, more than to any other cause, that war and its complicated evils, instead of being eradicated by the Gospel of peace, have been suffered to take deep root, to blossom and bring forth the most pestiferous fruit. The following remarks from the pen of a trans-atlantic writer, describing the way in which we receive, and adopt our opinions, and prejudices appear to be so just and proper, that I trust no apology will be required for laying them before your Grace.

“Of the speculative notions, and the rules of conduct, which are common among men, a large portion were imbibed, they know not how; and are persisted in, they hardly know why. These, whether right or wrong, attach themselves firmly to the mind. They serve for support in theory, and for excuse in practice. They are rarely doubted as they are seldom subjected to inquiry. Opinions long indulged in, fortified by association and endeared by habit, are not abandoned without reluctance, even when demonstrated to be false, and felt to be dangerous. Such opinions are the props by which the mind sustains itself against the concussions of doubt, and the fluctuations of uncertainty. We shrink from the thought of renouncing them, more than the assurance of their falsity; and as the mind delights in ease,

it may often be more readily pacified with what is wrong, if it be familiar, than roused to the examination, and impelled to the adoption of truth.*

On the principles laid down by this pacific writer, we may, I think, satisfactorily account for men of learning and integrity standing forth as the apologists or defenders of war and warriors. I shall therefore proceed to the examination of the opinions of these two eminent writers, Porteus and Paley, with the seriousness and caution the subject deserves.

As some may peruse these pages who have not the lectures of Bishop Porteus to refer to, I transcribe the following extract from his eighth lecture. Speaking of the centurion, whose son Christ had healed, he says:

“This is an unanswerable proof, that whenever men abandon themselves to impiety, infidelity, and profligacy, the fault is not in the situation, but in the heart; and that there is no mode of life, no employment or profession, which may not, if we please, be made consistent with a sincere belief in the Gospel, and with the practice of every duty we owe to our Maker, our Redeemer, our fellow creatures and ourselves.

“Nor is this the only instance in point; for it is extremely remarkable, and well worthy our attention, that among all the various characters we meet with in the New Testament, there are few represented in a more amiable light, or spoken of in stronger terms of approbation, than those of certain military men. Be-

* Thoughts on the practical advantages of those who hold the doctrine of peace, over those who vindicate war. Printed at New York, 1817.

sides the centurion, who is the subject of this lecture, it was a centurion who at our Saviour's crucifixion gave the voluntary, honest, and unprejudiced testimony in his favour, 'Truly this was the son of God.' (Matt. xxvii. 54.) It was a centurion who voluntarily preserved the life of St. Paul, when a proposition was made to destroy him after his shipwreck on the island of Melita. (Acts xxvii. 43.) It was a centurion to whom St. Peter was sent by the express appointment of God, to make him the first convert among the Gentiles: a distinction, of which he seemed every way worthy; being, as we are told, 'a just and a devout man; one that feared God with all his house; and gave much alms, and prayed to God alway.'" (Acts x. 2.)

"We see, then, that our centurion was not the only military man celebrated in the Gospel for his piety and virtue; nor are there wanting, thank God, distinguishing instances of the same kind in our own age, in our own nation, among our own commanders, and in the recent memory of every one here present. All which examples tend to confirm the observations already made, of the perfect consistency of a military, and every other mode of life, with a firm belief in the doctrines, and a conscientious obedience to the precepts of religion.

"Thirdly, there is still another reflection arising from this circumstance, with which I shall conclude the present lecture; and this is, that when we observe men bred up in arms, repeatedly spoken of in Scripture, in such strong terms of commendation as those we have mentioned, we are authorised to conclude that the

profession they are engaged in, is not, as a mistaken sect of Christians amongst us profess to think, an unlawful one : on the contrary, it seems to be studiously placed by the sacred writers in a favourable and honourable light ; and in this light it always has been, and ought always to be considered. He who undertakes an occupation of great toil and great danger, for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting his country, is a most valuable and respectable member of society ; and if he conducts himself with valour, fidelity, and humanity, and amidst the horrors of war cultivates the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout and holy life, he most amply deserves and will assuredly receive the esteem, the admiration, and the applause of his grateful country, and what is of still greater importance, the approbation of his God.”*

As the most popular arguments generally used in favour of war, and the military profession, are here marshalled and placed in a favourable point of view by an eloquent writer, I trust I need not apologise to your Grace for the length of the foregoing extract, or for my answering at some length the arguments it contains. I am aware that the answers I am about to offer, have already, in substance, been urged, not only by

* By way of contrast to these opinions, I beg to state to you, those of Sir Walter Raleigh, a man of great knowledge, and experience of the world, also well read in the Scriptures. When on the scaffold he thus addressed the spectators. “ And now I entreat you all to join with me in prayer to the great God of heaven, whom I have grievously offended, being a man full of vanity and have lived a sinful life in all sinful callings, having been a soldier, a captain, a sea-captain, and a courtier ; which are all places of wickedness and vice ;—that God, I say, would forgive me, and cast away my sins from me, and that he would receive me into everlasting life.”

writers of respectability since the Reformation, but by some of the best writers in the early ages of Christianity. The excuse I have for repeating them here is, that the writings on this subject have been little read, and still less attended to. They are condemned without being read.

From what is related concerning the centurion first referred to (Matt. viii.) we may conclude that he was firmly impressed with a belief in the supernatural powers possessed by our Saviour. This conviction, belief, or faith, (call it by what name you please,) appears to be what is so highly praised by our Lord, when he says; "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. It is not, however, to be imagined that a Roman soldier could have any definite ideas concerning the Messiahship of Jesus, or those points of faith which modern Christians deem of so much importance. That this centurion was a man of a modest and humble frame of mind, and so far resembling a Christian, is highly probable from his demeanour towards our Saviour; and that he was also a man of general benevolence, we may conclude from his liberal conduct towards the Jews, at that time a despised and degraded people. But neither these things collectively, nor any other particular related of him, prove him to have been a Christian; and it is certain he might be every thing here represented, and yet remain a pagan, and by no means superior to many pagans whose histories are handed down to us. As idolatrous services were required of all Roman soldiers, I am unavoidably led to the conclusion, either that this centurion remained merely a

virtuous pagan ; or else, upon embracing Christianity, that he, like other Romans similarly circumstanced, of whom I shall have occasion to speak in my next letter, quitted the profession of arms : for it must be borne in mind that he could not remain in the Roman army without performing idolatrous acts ; and consequently, he could not, if a soldier, be a real Christian.

As to the expression of the centurion at the crucifixion, "Truly this was the Son of God," it only proves that he was compelled by the awful scene he witnessed, to acknowledge that Jesus was more than a common man. (Compare Matt. xxvii. 54, with Luke xxiii. 47.) Dr. Porteus, in his zeal, has here gone too far. The text says, "Now when the centurion, and *they that were with him*, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying "Truly this was the Son of God." If, therefore, any praise is due to the centurion for this saying, the same praise is also due to *those who were with him*, viz. the executioners of our Saviour. As to the conduct of the other centurion towards St. Paul, related Acts xxvii. 43, it only shows what every person of candour must readily admit, that a pagan soldier may be, what Christian soldiers frequently are not, humane and benevolent.

The case of the last centurion, mentioned in Acts x. 2. though more to the point, affords no satisfactory evidence to decide the question. This pious and good man, it seems probable, became a sincere Christian. One fact, however, and that a very important one, we are altogether ignorant of, viz., whether this centurion

quitted the military profession on becoming a Christian. The advocates for this profession, in which number is Dr. Paley, suppose that he remained a soldier, because (says Dr. P.) the narrative gives no account of his quitting the situation he then held. This is mere conjecture, unattended by proof; and it surely seems far more probable, from the idolatrous services required of Roman soldiers, as well as from the practices of the Christians of the two first centuries, of which I shall have occasion presently to speak, that this centurion relinquished the profession of arms; or else that he, like Naaman, worshipped in the heathen temple occasionally, or that he altogether relapsed into paganism.

DR. PORTEUS, in all that he has said, does not appear to have advanced one solid argument to justify the sweeping and unauthorised conclusion he has drawn. And, after giving to his remarks, or to his special pleading, the serious consideration the subject deserves, what he has said, though imposing, amounts to very little. He pronounces, with a degree of gravity that would lead one to suspect either his judgment or his sincerity, that "He who undertakes an occupation of great toil and danger, for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting his country is a most valuable and respectable member of society; and if he conducts himself with valour, fidelity, and humanity, and, amidst the horrors of war, cultivates the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout life, he most amply deserves, and will assuredly receive the esteem, the admiration and the applause of his grateful country,

and, what is of greater importance, the approbation of his God."

These remarks are so very singular and surprising, that I must beg your Grace's attention to them. The first of them, though not so intended, does in reality convey a severe and sarcastic censure upon military men; for where do we meet with those who deserve the character here drawn? The amiable bishop must have had ministers of the Gospel, not military men in his mind's eye; and even these do not very frequently devote themselves to this kind of quixotism. Instead of entering the navy or army "for the purpose of serving, defending, and protecting their country," officers in general enter them with just the same selfish views and motives that men enter upon any other profession or trade. Of officers it may in general be said that they are quite as desirous as other men,—as tradesmen, to acquire wealth; but a wish to obtain rank and honour generally predominates; they look forward to *a golden chain or a wooden leg; a peerage or a monument in Westminster Abbey*. How men who receive daily wages to do the utmost violence to the persons and property of their brethren, can, in the faithful discharge of their duty "cultivate the gentle manners of peace," is an enigma that the Gospel of Peace cannot solve. Men placed in their situation may "conduct themselves with valour;" they may refrain from the use of the scalping knife; (which in our days has not always been done by our own nation;) they may refrain from the brutal violence of past ages; (but what says the storming of St. Sebastian?) After inflicting injuries and

wounds, they may visit the wounded, the sick, and the prisoner with humanity ; but how are they to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction ? Their trade is to make widows, and to render children fatherless. How, in the exercise of such a trade, men can “ cultivate the gentle manners of peace, and the virtues of a devout life,” it is not easy to conceive. At one period of his life, this venerable prelate appeared to think very differently ; at college, he said

“————— one murder made a villain,
Millions a hero,—Princes were privileged
To kill, and numbers sanctified the crime.”

It is painful, my Lord, to say any thing conveying the slightest censure on this amiable and well-intentioned prelate : but I wish, by stating facts, to warn those who may read these pages against forming their opinions regarding war on the authority of fallible men, however distinguished by learning, talent, and integrity ; for all uninspired men are liable to error—“ to put darkness for light, and light for darkness.” Whilst we have the precepts of Jesus ; whilst we have the writings of the inspired apostles for our guides, and are blessed with common sense,—what insanity are we guilty of to desert these, and suffer fallible men to conduct us from a *high-way*, into interminable mazes and labyrinths ; to lead us astray from the Gospel of Peace, into the paths of endless war and bloodshed ! Let the devout Christian study the New Testament, and make it the rule of his conduct, leaving the consequence to that great Being by whose spirit the Gospel of Peace was dictated.

I have, in a note, page 157, contrasted the opinions of Bishop Porteus with those of Sir Walter Raleigh. Permit me to recommend to your perusal those of a man of a very different character, the pacific Erasmus, who says ;

“If you detest robbery and pillage, remember these are among the duties of war ; and that, to learn how to commit them adroitly, is a part of military discipline. Do you shudder at the idea of murder ? You cannot require to be told, that to commit it with despatch, and by wholesale, constitutes the celebrated art of war. If murder were not learned by this art, how could a man, who should shudder to kill one individual, even when provoked, go, in cold blood, and cut the throats of many for a little paltry pay, and under no better authority than a commission from a mortal as weak, wicked, and wretched as himself, who does not perhaps know even his person, and would not care if both his body and soul were annihilated ? If there cannot be a greater misfortune to a commonwealth, than a general neglect and disobedience of the laws, let it be considered as a certain truth, that the voice of law, divine or human, is never heard amid the clangor of arms and the din of battle. If you deem debauchery, rapes, incest, and crimes of still greater turpitude than these, foul disgraces to human nature,—depend upon it that war leads to all of them, in their most aggravated atrocity. If impiety, or a total neglect of religion, is the source of all villainy, be assured that religion is always overwhelmed in the storms of war.”—*Complaint of Peace*, pp. 64, 65.

Leaving your Grace, and the numerous body of pious and learned ministers of the Church of England to meditate on this subject—a subject which, considering its high importance to the happiness of the world, has little engaged the attention of good men, I proceed to consider the remarks of Dr. Paley. I do not, my Lord, enter upon this inquiry in a spirit of exultation ; I feel my great inferiority in point of talent to both these learned men. But I enter upon it, with the strongest conviction that I have truth on my side—the truth as it is in Jesus ; and that this truth must and will triumph over learning and every obstacle.

To maintain that Christianity permits its votaries with innocence to engage in war, is, in effect to erase from the Gospel all those divine laws and rules which our Lord gave to his first followers for their government. If Christianity gives a sanction to war ; if, indeed, it does not virtually prohibit it, it can hardly be called the “Gospel of Peace,” and it is quite an absurdity to expect that it should eradicate war from the world—an absurdity similar to expecting that a stupendous effect will be produced by an inadequate cause. It is indeed to expect that the Gospel will annihilate the very thing that it is said to sanction.

As DR. PALEY speaks of the conduct of the different Roman centurions, in nearly the same terms as BISHOP PORTEUS and others have done ; and as he uses nearly the same arguments, or rather rhetoric, to show the lawfulness of the military profession,—I shall not notice what the venerable archdeacon has said respecting these centurions, but confine myself to the general ar-

guments brought forward by him and others in favour of the military profession.

One of the most popular pleas in favour of the military profession is from Luke xxii. 36. "Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." These words of our Lord, at first sight, appear to give a sanction to the use of swords; otherwise it seems difficult to account for the advice given to the apostles to sell their garments, and purchase swords. But from our Lord's remark, in the 38th verse that *two swords were enough*, we may infer, that he did not mean his advice to be literally taken, for two swords were a very inadequate supply for twelve men. As a plain proof that the followers of Jesus are not, in any case, sanctioned to use the sword, he says to Peter in this same discourse, (as related by St. Matthew, ch. xxvi. 52.) "Put up thy sword, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." As a further proof, our Lord, when brought before Pilate, informs him that his kingdom is of a spiritual nature, and assigns this as a reason why his servants were not to fight. "If my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews." From the latter part of the sentence, and his preventing Peter from using the sword, even to save the life of his beloved Lord and Master, it may safely be affirmed, that we are not permitted, in any case, to use the sword in opposing magisterial power. Different expositions of this command of our Saviour have been advanced; but

surely, my Lord, no exposition of a casual expression like this ought to be literally interpreted, when it runs counter to the uniform pacific precepts of the Gospel. These precepts, as contained in the Sermon on the Mount, contain not only a system of benevolence, the most pure and noble ; but as I have already observed a system of politeness, the most perfect ; of disinterestedness the most noble, and of universal love. It is alike fitted for ages the most rude and the most refined. In expounding such passages of Scripture as the above, we have a safe key in the practice of the early Christians, of which I shall have occasion in a subsequent letter to speak ; and we ought never to admit any explanation which runs counter to the general tenour of prophecy relating to the kingdom of the Messiah.*

Another argument, though certainly a less cogent one than the preceding, is drawn by some of the advocates for war, from the remark of our Lord, Matt. x. 34. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace, but a sword." The reasons already advanced, forbid us to suppose that Jesus, *the Prince of Peace*, here gives a sanction to his followers to use the sword. All that we ought to infer from these words, allowing them to be of general application to Christians of all periods, and of all nations, is, that the expression is prophetic, and contains a prophecy that the religion of Christ, would in after-times, be so per-

* To be consistent, the ministers of Christ, who advance this argument, ought to wear swords. As none of the apostles, as far as we know, ever obeyed this command, we may conclude, that our Saviour did not mean it to be understood literally ; and therefore that it gives no sanction to the followers of Christ, to be warriors.

verted and abused ; and by its perversion and abuse, not by its legitimate use, would, instead of producing peace and philanthropy among its votaries, “ set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, &c.” There is another explanation of this prophecy which, perhaps, ought to be preferred. If, instead of applying it generally, we confine it to the Jewish nation, (to whom it was addressed,) and to the land of Judea, all difficulty in ascertaining its real meaning will be removed. The expression here used, *on earth*, is of frequent use in the New Testament. It sometimes means the terraqueous globe, or the whole earth, as in Luke x. 21, and Matt. v. 35. Sometimes it means merely the ground, or the soil, as in Matt. xiii. 8. And sometimes it is applied to point out a particular country or district, as in Matt. ii. 21. If we take the expression in this latter sense, and apply it to the land of Judea, how awfully do we find this prophecy fulfilled in the history of the Jews ! Let Christians, my Lord, endeavour to ascertain the real or scriptural meaning of similar expressions, and not the orthodox or modern meaning ; and they will ascertain how far this prophecy applies to them.

The wars in which the Jews were engaged are, as already observed, often brought forward in excuse for Christians engaging in war. But the Jewish wars were entered into, if not by the direct commandment of God, yet after inquiry made from his inspired prophets. When Christians can show similar authority, then, but not till then, will they be justified in departing from the plainly expressed commands of the New

Testament. On the subject of these wars, I beg leave respectfully to refer your Grace to the third and fifth Letters I have had the honour to address to you.

Having answered some of the most popular arguments drawn from Scripture, that are generally urged in excuse of Christians engaging in war, I beg to transcribe a few remarks of Dr. Paley on this subject. In his chapter on war and military establishments, he says : "Because the Christian Scriptures describe wars as what they are, as crimes or judgments, some have been lead to believe, that it is unlawful to bear arms." It is unnecessary to say that I draw this inference ; and surely, if wars are crimes no good man ought to engage in them, or in any way participate in them. I know of no argument more cogent to induce us to refrain from any practice, than to say that in the Christian Scriptures it is described as a crime ; and, my Lord, if a crime, it cannot require any further proof to show that it is criminal to engage in it ; and the criminality of making it a trade to live by must be still more evident. Dr. Paley adds : "But it should be remembered, that it may be necessary for individuals to unite their force, and, for this end, to resign themselves to the direction of a common will ; and yet it may be true, that that will is often actuated by criminal motives, and often determined by destructive purposes." I hardly know how to express the regret I feel that the author of the Evidences of Christianity should have thus expressed himself. He appears to have "put darkness for light." And the prophet Isaiah seems to describe by anticipation the evils necessarily result-

ing therefrom. "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy one of Israel: therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand, and smitten them." Isaiah v. 25.

In speaking of the causes which, in the opinion of Dr. Paley, justify war he appears equally censurable. "The justifying causes of war, (says he, in the same chapter) are deliberate invasions of right, and the necessity of maintaining such a *balance of power* amongst neighbouring nations, that no single state, or confederacy of states, be strong enough to overwhelm the rest. The objects of just war, are, precaution, defence, or reparation. In a larger sense, every just war is a defensive war, inasmuch as every just war supposes an injury, perpetrated, or feared. *"

These remarks of the Moral and Political Philosopher present a dreary prospect of the future. Among confederate states some must from industry, or some other cause, be increasing in strength or power, and consequently become objects of fear or apprehension to other states. These, in order to maintain an equilibrium, or *balance of power*, are authorised to wage a just, or defensive war; and, by way of *precaution*, carry it on till this flourishing state is reduced to the level of surrounding states or kingdoms. The situa-

* See Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy. Ch. xii.

tion of sovereign princes must be one of continual danger, and subject to frequent change. The history of the last fifty years verifies the remark, and shows that a better system than that of moral and political philosophy is wanted to give "Peace on earth." One of the greatest excellencies of Christianity, and consequently one of the most potent evidences of its truth, is, that by forbidding violence of every kind ; by forbidding to shed blood, even in our own defence, it is eminently calculated to disarm anger, to convert enemies into friends, and thereby establish universal peace. This is the benevolent system observed by God towards his creatures, and it is the system which Christ has taught us to observe towards our brethren. Were this system duly inculcated, it would render men altogether unfit for soldiers ; and princes and statesmen, however contrary to their principles, must, of necessity, refrain from war.

Montesquieu, advocates principles similar to those of Dr. Paley ; he says : " Entre les sociétés le droit de la defense naturelle entraine quelquefois la necessité d'attaquer, lorsqu'un peuple voit qu'un plus longue paix en mettrait un autre en etat de le detruire, et que l'attaque est dans ce moment le seul moyen d'empêcher cette destruction." If the principles laid down by these two great men for the government of states, were to be applied to individuals, they would give a sanction to one man to kill another whom he suspected of an intention to kill him—to one man to maim or wound another whom he might suspect of an intention to maim or wound him—to take an eye for an eye, or a tooth

for a tooth, directly contrary to the teaching of our Saviour. By such a system, the benevolent precepts of the Gospel, if not destroyed, are rendered of little practical benefit; and Christians looking forward to the accomplishment of the prophecies, might exclaim that "Christ is dead in vain!"

However contrary such conduct may be to the real principles of Dr. Paley, he appears to give some sanction to it, when he says, "If the cause be justifiable, all the means that appear necessary to the end are justifiable also." If we connect this with the *justifiable causes of war* already mentioned, we may further infer, that if one king is afraid of the growing power of another, he has justifiable cause for waging *defensive war* against him; and (the cause of the war being justifiable) the means of bringing it to an end, are also justifiable. On the principles of moral philosophy, instead of killing, in what is called an honourable way, fifty or an hundred thousand men, and making bonfires of their dwellings, would not a prince display more mercy, and, consequently, more moral philosophy, in employing an assassin, or poison, to remove *hors de combat* the king who has been guilty of a *deliberate invasion of his rights*, and this either *to obtain reparation*, or by way of *precaution and self defence*? And, *the cause being justifiable, all the means that appear necessary to the end, are justifiable also.*"

It is painful, my Lord, to make remarks like these, on the writings of one of the ablest defenders of Christianity: but the inferences I have drawn from the writings of this popular author, appear to me to be

legitimate : and however high Dr. Paley may rank in our own country, as a moralist, I think that any king, or state, that publicly professed to be guided by the principles he advocates, would be shunned and detested by every nation that, like the sovereigns united in holy alliance, might entertain more correct views of moral and political philosophy, or rather of Christian morals.*

After what I have stated, I think I shall not be taxed with presumption, in affirming, that (however unintentionally) Dr. Paley, Bishop Porteus, and Montesquieu, and a multitude of great men, "have called evil good, and good evil" that they have "put light for darkness, and darkness for light." May we not also join with the inspired writer, and say of nations who have adopted such principles, "*Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand and smitten them.*"

Though the writings of Machiaviel have been by many much abused ; yet, on the subject of war and the military profession, his views appear more consonant with the precepts of Jesus, than those of the writers I have quoted. He says, with what justice I leave your Grace to decide : " War being a profession by which men cannot live honourably at all times, is not to be taken up as a trade, unless it be by a commonwealth or a kingdom ; and if they be well constituted, they will neither of them suffer any of their citizens or subjects, or any other good man, to make it his business ; for he will never be thought a good man who takes

* See Letter to the late King George the Fourth, pp. 26, 27.

upon him an employment by which, if he would reap any profit at any time, he is obliged to be false and rapacious, and cruel; and to entertain several other qualities that are not consistent in a good man; nor can any man, great or small, who makes war his profession, be otherwise than vicious. Have you not a proverb, which confirms what I say, that "War makes thieves and peace brings them to the gallows?" The same author observes, that "Rome, while it was well governed (which was till the reign of the Grachi) had never any soldier who made it his profession to be so; by which means few of them were dissolute."

I feel much satisfaction, my Lord, in believing that our armies and fleets, at least, as to a considerable portion of them, are now composed of men of a very different character from that of military men in the days of Machiavel. Of those of the present day, many are, no doubt, men of the very best intentions, men of true benevolence and unaffected piety. I rejoice in believing that this is the case, inasmuch as it may be considered as a preparatory step to ceasing altogether to learn war. I am not singular in thinking it probable, that, as military men become more enlightened by literature and science, and imbued with Christian principles, they will cease to be members of standing armies. These armies, if not conquered by superior armies, necessarily lead to despotism; and despotism seldom fails to produce the downfall of a nation, and with it the downfall of Christian principles; for Christianity and despotism cannot thrive together. Bigotry

and despotism may go hand in hand, and have generally done so ; but Christianity, at the same time that it inculcates submission to the powers that be, commands us to obey God rather than man ; and that when we render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, we must remember to render unto God the things which are God's.

How far military men, by trade or profession, can comply with the first principles of our religion is a question of high importance to the soldier, the statesman, and the Christian ; and more particularly my Lord, to the Christian minister, it being his peculiar and obvious duty, to recall men to the " Faith once delivered to the saints," those who have strayed from it. This is a subject which properly belongs to a former Letter, (to Letter No. iv. ;) to which I crave permission to refer your Grace, and those who may favour these letters with their perusal.

In the present state of the world, we appear to have no alternative between relapsing, by means of war, into the vice and gross darkness, from which we are emerging, or proceeding in the paths of science and literature, enlightened by the sunbeams of Christianity, and advancing to the happy epoch, when men shall beat their swords into plough-shares.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER IX.

ON THE PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS RELATING
TO WAR.

Most Reverend Sir,

Numerous tracts, not to say volumes, have been written by theologians of different sects of Christians, for the purpose of establishing their peculiar religious tenets, by endeavouring to show that the early Christians held the same opinions as themselves; and this without producing uniformity of opinion. Notwithstanding this has been the case respecting the theological opinions of the early Christians, I trust more satisfaction, and certainty may be obtained from enquiries concerning the practices, or opinions, of early Christians relating to war. Theological opinions may change, and good and conscientious men are the most likely to experience this change; but facts must always remain the same; they are matter of history: they are the best keys to opinions. An enquiry, therefore into the practices of the early Christians, respecting war, will form the chief subject of the letter I am about to address to your Grace. I shall not, however, on an

occasion like the present, altogether neglect to notice the opinion of some of the early Christian Fathers, as these opinions are important, and expressed with much clearness and precision.

Permit me, here, my Lord, to express a hope that as the theological opinions of the early Christian Fathers, are at present held in such high veneration by a large and influential body of Christians, as to be used as a key for deciding theological controversies, and this, by men alike distinguished for their piety and learning, —allow me, therefore, my Lord, to express a hope that the inquiries of these learned and good men, will be extended to the *practices* of the Christian Fathers, in regard to war, and the profession of arms ; a subject of more importance, than mere matters of opinion. Should they find these such as I propose now stating them to your Grace, I trust I may indulge the hope that they will join the ranks of the friends of peace.

It is often asserted, and asserted with much confidence, that there always have been, and always will be wars : and further, that wars of defence, are permitted to Christians. From my having formed a very different opinion, on evidence which has appeared perfectly satisfactory to me, I was much surprised at meeting with some extracts from a sermon preached in 1798, by the then Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley ; among these is the following. “It is little less than a calumny on the Christian religion, to pretend, as some have pretended, that defensive war, is, either contrary to the general spirit of the morality of the Gospel, or forbidden by any particular precept, or discouraged

by the example of the first Christians. The notorious fact is, that they scrupled not to serve in the armies of even their heathen sovereigns."

Although the New Testament, is the only book to decide what is the duty of Christians, regarding war ; yet, if we suppose that it leaves us in any doubt on the subject, an inquiry into the practices and opinions of the early Christians, becomes of importance ; for as they lived so much nearer to the times of the apostles, they may be supposed less liable to error than we are. The assertion that the *early* Christians "scrupled not to serve in the armies of even heathen sovereigns," may, without difficulty, be shown to be both true and false. It may be shown to be strictly true as it regards one period of the early Christian history, viz. ; the third and fourth centuries ; and altogether false as regards a *more early* period. On this subject, as on most subjects where the happiness of mankind, and the interests of Christianity are concerned, an author of great industry, and integrity, appears to have taken much pains to obtain the best information. He says, "that long after the introduction of the Christian religion into the world, —that is, while the lamp of Christianity burnt pure and bright,—not only the Fathers of the Church held it unlawful for Christians to bear arms, but those who came within the pale of it, abstained from the use of them, and this, to the certain loss of their lives ; and it was not till Christianity became corrupted, that its followers became soldiers." Again he says, "That as the lamp of Christianity burnt bright in those early times, so those who were illuminated by it, declin-

ed the military profession ; that as its flame shone less clear, they had less objection to it ; and that it was not till Christianity became corrupted, that its followers became soldiers. Thus, in the first two centuries, when Christianity was purest, there are no Christian soldiers on record. In the third century, when it became less pure, there is frequent mention of such soldiers. And in the fourth, when its corruption was fixed, Christians entered generally upon the profession of arms, with as little hesitation as they entered upon any other occupation of life.”*

If Dr. Horsley carried his inquiries no further back than the fourth or third century, his remark is correct ; but if he meant to apply it to Christians of the first and second centuries, I apprehend he was in error. Instead of indulging in rhetorical flourishes and bold assertion, on a grave and serious subject, he ought to have produced historical proof. The author to whom I have referred, has done this, and has quoted at considerable length, authorities of the highest respectability. If there is any fallacy or deficiency in his evidence, it surely becomes the duty of the clergy, to point it out. The subject is not of a trivial nature, it involves the happiness of heathens, as well as Christians.

Not being in possession of originals, I presume to offer to your Grace, a few remarks on the authority of this philanthropist. With respect then, to the practices of the early Christians, it may be observed, notwithstanding the assertions of Dr. Horsley, that there is no well

* See Clarkson's Essay on the Doctrines and Practice of the early Christians, as they relate to war ; or see his *Portraiture of Quakerism*.

authenticated instance upon record, of Christians entering into the army, for nearly the whole of the two first centuries; but it is true, on the other hand, that they had declined the military profession, as one in which it was not lawful for them to engage. This is evident from the following facts, which reach from about the year 170, to about 195. Cassius had rebelled against the emperor Verus, and was slain a short time afterwards. Claudius Albinus in one part of the world, and Peseenius Niger in another, had rebelled against the emperor Severus, and both were slain. Now, the suspicion fell, as it always did in these times, upon the Christians; as having been concerned upon these occasions. But Tertullian tells us, in his discourse to Scapula that this suspicion was totally groundless. "You defamed us," says he, "by charging us with having been guilty of treason to our emperors; but not a Christian could be found in the rebel armies, whether commanded by Cassius, Albinus, or Niger." These facts are of considerable importance, as the armies alluded to comprehend between one half and one third of the standing legions of Rome; and the circumstance is the more remarkable, as, according to Tertullian, Christianity had reached all the places in which these armies were.

That Christians generally, if not universally, refrained from entering into the armies at this period, may be gathered from the distinctions made between soldiers and Christians by Justin the martyr and Tatian. The latter says, "that the Christians declined even military commands." Clemens of Alexandria makes a

similar distinction, he says, speaking of Christians, "The peaceable never used sword or bow."

The application of the prophecy of Isaiah ii. 2-4, to this subject supplies direct evidence that the early Christians refrained from war. Justin the martyr, in his first Apology, quoting it says, "that these things have come to pass"—"and we who once were slayers of one another, do not fight against our enemies." Apol. cap. 39. p. 67. Ed. Ben. Speaking of the same prophecy, Ireneus (A. D. 167) proves its application to our Saviour, by the fact that "the followers of Jesus had disused the weapons of war, and no longer knew how to fight." Adv. Hær. lib. iv. cap. 34, page 275 Ed. Ben. Tertullian also maintains that this prophecy was accomplished as far as the practice of every individual is concerned to whom it is applicable. How differently, my Lord, do these pious men reason, from the learned men of our times. One would think it hardly possible that these early Christian Fathers, and Bishops Porteus and Horsley, and Dr. Paley and other learned men have drawn their opinions concerning war, the most ruinous and antichristian of all customs, from the same sacred volume. How can we account for this strange discrepancy, but by supposing that these learned and pious Fathers were fanatics, or else that Christians of the present day, even learned men, Bishops of the established church, have departed from "the faith once delivered to the saints:" or that Christians in the nineteenth century are lingering under the great *falling away* from the faith, predicted by St. Paul; or that theological knowledge is yet in its infancy. We live,

my Lord, in an age of wide-spreading scepticism ; surely it cannot be beneath the dignity of the clergy, or even of your Grace, to show to the world what is truly the doctrine of the New Testament regarding war and the military profession.

Should your Grace reject the evidence of the early Christian Fathers to whom I have appealed as that of fanatics, I entreat you to attend to the testimony of Celsus, the bitter enemy of the early Christians, and no fanatic. On a point like the present, bearing testimony to an historical fact, his evidence appears decisive. This enemy of Christians makes it one of his charges against them, that, "in his times, they refused to bear arms for the emperor, even in cases of necessity, and when their services would have been accepted." He adds, "that if the rest of the empire were of their opinion, it would soon be over-run by the barbarians. It seems very improbable that Celsus would have made such a charge against the Christians, had not the facts alleged been true, as his falsehood might have been easily detected and exposed. And as the charge against Christians was one of a very serious nature, it seems very certain that, had he been able, Origen would have rebutted the accusation. So far from attempting this, he admits the facts stated by Celsus, that Christians in his time would not bear arms and justifies them on the ground of the *unlawfulness of war*. Here we have the testimony of a friend, and also of an enemy of Christianity to this historical fact ; that the early Christians would not *wear weapons and serve in war*. No stronger testimony can be given, or required.

It may here be observed that Tertullian, in another part of his works, speaks of Christians who were engaged together with their heathen countrymen in military pursuits. He plainly condemns this practice; but "in his time, if not before," says Dr. Jortin, "there were some Christian soldiers, and it is hard to conceive how they could maintain their innocence in that station, and avoid such practices as were scarcely allowable. It is to be supposed, that Christians kept out of the army as much as they possibly could." To show the depravity of some Christians of this period, Tertullian states the very extraordinary fact of manufacturers of idols being admitted into the ecclesiastical order. But, in his *Soldier's Garland*, he clearly expresses *his own* opinion respecting the lawfulness of the military profession, when he says, "Can a soldier's life be lawful, when Christ has said that 'he who lives by the sword, shall perish by the sword'?" And again, "shall he who is not to revenge his own wrongs be instrumental in bringing others into chains, imprisonment, torment, and death?"

With respect to the *opinions* of the first Christian writers after the apostles, or of those who are usually styled the Fathers of the Church, relative to war, I believe we shall find them nearly alike for nearly three hundred years, if not for a longer period. Justin the martyr, one of the earliest of those of the second century *considers war as unlawful*. He makes, also, *the devil the author of all war*. No severer censure could have been passed upon it than this, when we consider it as coming from the lips of an early Christian. The

sentiment, too; was contrary to the prevailing opinions of the times, when, of all professions, that of war was the most honourable, and was the only one that was considered to lead to glory. It resulted, therefore, in all probability from the new views which Justin had acquired by a perusal of such of the Scriptures as had fallen into his hands.

TATIAN, who was a disciple of Justin, in his *Oration to the Greeks*, speaks in the same terms on the same subject.

From various expressions of *Clemens* of Alexandria, a contemporary of the latter, we collect his opinion to be decisive also, against the lawfulness of war.

CYPRIAN, in his *Epistle to Donatus*, takes a view of such customs in his own times as he conceived to be repugnant to the spirit or letter of the Gospel, and then remarks: "When a single murder is committed, it shall be deemed perhaps a crime; but that crime shall commence a virtue, when committed under the shelter of public authority; so that punishment is not rated by the measure of guilt; but the more enormous the crime is, so much the greater is the chance of impunity."

LACTANTIUS says: "It can never be lawful for a righteous man to go to war; whose warfare is righteousness itself." And in another place he observes, that "No exception can be made with respect to this command of God. It can never be lawful to kill a man, whose person the Divine Being designed to be sacred as to violence."

I have now, my Lord, produced a collection of *facts*, together with the *opinions* of some of the best early

Christian writers ; all tending to show, that for nearly the whole of the first two centuries, none of those who were considered as *real* Christians by the writers I have quoted, were members of the military profession ; and I think that these Fathers of the Church would have considered the remarks of Bishops Horsley and Porteus as little less than gross calumnies upon the early Christians, and highly injurious to Christianity itself. In what light they would have considered the xxxviiith Article of the Church of England is a question to which I cannot too often call the attention of your Grace, and the ministers of the Established Church, whose opinions appear to be in direct opposition to those of these primitive Christians. This opinion will, I think, receive confirmation from the church history of the succeeding centuries, to which I must now beg leave to direct the attention of your Grace.

It having been frequently remarked that the early Christians refrained from the military profession, not on account of its unlawfulness, but because of the idolatrous services required from military men in the Roman armies, it is necessary that I should distinctly show that they regarded the unlawfulness of war, independent of every other consideration, as a just cause for refraining from it, or for quitting the military profession. This, indeed appears highly probable from what has been said ; but as this is a matter of moment, and some stress has been laid upon this argument, it seems desirable, in the first place, to ascertain this fact. The case of Maximilian, preserved in the Acts of Ruinart, is strictly in point.

Maximilian having been brought before the tribunal, in order to be enrolled as a soldier, Dion the proconsul, asked him his name. Maximilian, turning to him, replied ; " Why wouldest thou know my name ? I am a Christian and cannot fight.

Upon being enrolled, Dion bid the officer to mark him. But Maximilian refused to be marked, still asserting that he was a Christian. Upon which Dion instantly replied, " Bear arms, or thou shalt die." To this Maximilian answered, " I cannot fight, if I die : I am not a soldier of this world, but a soldier of God." Dion then said, " Who has persuaded thee to behave thus ?" Maximilian answered, " My own mind, and he who hath called me." Dion then spoke to his father, and bade him persuade his son. But his father observed, that his son knew his own mind, and what it was best for him to do.

After this had passed, Dion addressed Maximilian again in these words : " Take thy arms and receive the mark." " I can receive no such mark" said Maximilian ; " I have already the mark of Christ." Upon which, Dion said, " I will send thee to thy Christ." Thou mayest do so, he replied, " but the glory will be mine."

Dion then bade the officer to mark him. But Maximilian still persisted in refusing, and spoke thus : " I cannot receive the mark of this world. And if thou shouldest give me the mark, I will destroy it. It will avail nothing. I am a Christian, and it is not lawful for me to wear such a mark about my neck, when I have received the saving mark of the Lord Jesus Christ,

the Son of the living God, whom thou knowest not, who died to give us life, and whom God gave for our sins. Him all we Christians obey. Him we follow, as the Restorer of our life, and the Author of our salvation."

Dion instantly replied to this, "Take thy arms and receive the mark, or thou shalt suffer a miserable death." "But I shall not perish," said Maximilian, "my name is already enrolled with Christ. I cannot fight."

Dion said, "Consider then thy youth, and bear arms. The profession of arms becomes a young man." Maximilian replied, "My arms are with the Lord, I cannot fight for any earthly consideration. I am now a Christian."

Dion, the proconsul, said, "Among the life guards of our masters Dioclesian and Maximilian, and Constantius and Maximus, there are Christian soldiers, and they fight." Maximilian answered, "They know best what is most expedient for them; but I am a Christian, and it is unlawful to do evil."

Dion said "Take thy arms. Despise not the profession of a soldier, lest thou perish miserably."—"But I shall not perish," says Maximilian; "and if I should leave this world, my soul will live with Christ the Lord."

Dion then ordered his name to be struck from the roll; and when this was done, he proceeded,—"Because out of thy rebellious spirit, thou hast refused to bear arms, thou shalt be punished according to thy deserts, for an example to others." And then he delivered the following sentence: "Maximilian, because thou hast refused to bear arms, thou shalt die by the

sword." Maximilian replied "Thanks be to God!"

The case of Maximilian exhibits to us the noble and instructive example of a conscientious Christian, suffering death, rather than compromise his duty. The idolatrous services required of Roman soldiers, formed no part of the objections he urged. I will now give you the case of a man of the rank of a centurion, who, when in the army, was converted to Christianity, and from conscientious motives, withdrew from it, preferring the death of a martyr, to the life of a soldier.

Marcellus was a centurion in the legion, called Trajana. On a festival given in honour of the birth-day of Galerius, he threw down his military belt at the head of the legion, and in the face of the standards, declared with a loud voice, that he would no longer serve in the army, for he had become a Christian. "I hold in detestation," says he, addressing himself to the soldiers, "the worship of your gods which are made of wood and stone; gods which are deaf and dumb." So far Marcellus seems to have been influenced in his desertion of a military life, by the idolatry connected with it. But let us hear him further on the same subject. "It is not lawful," says he, for a Christian, who is a servant of Christ the Lord, to bear arms for any earthly consideration." After a delay of more than three months in prison after this transaction, which delay was allowed for the purpose of sparing him, he was brought before the prefect. There he had an opportunity of correcting his former expression. But as he persisted in the same sentiments, he suffered. It is remarkable that, almost immediately after his ex-

ecution, Cassian, who was the notary of the same legion, refused to serve any longer, by publicly throwing his pen and account book upon the ground, and declaring at the same time, that the sentence of Marcellus was unjust. When taken up by the order of Aurelianus Agricolanus, he is described, by the record preserved by Ruinart, to have avowed the same sentiments as as Marcellus, and like him, to have suffered death.*

I cannot, my Lord, pass by the affecting statements concerning these martyrs, without venturing to offer a few reflections that these interesting narratives call forth. How are we, my Lord, to account for the fact, that during the first two centuries, the professors of Christianity were more zealous, more earnest about their religion, than those of latter ages? The fact appears to be established beyond all doubt, that the early Christians, taking the Scriptures for their guide, considered the military profession as unlawful, and preferred death to a participation in its crimes. Professing to be guided by the very same sacred authority, Christians for more than a thousand years past, have with very few exceptions, maintained that the Scriptures sanction men, when licensed by their rulers, to devote themselves to the trade of war, and deliberately to slaughter each other by thousands. The benevolent spirit of the present age, it is said, far surpasses that of the preceding ones; but how far, my Lord, do we fall short of that noble and heroic spirit, that devotion

* "The accounts of these martyrdoms," says Gibbon, "bear every mark of truth and authenticity." See *Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*. vol. ii. p. 464.

to the will of God, that love and reverence for the Saviour and Benefactor of the human race, and that *love for the brethren*, which peculiarly distinguished the early Christians ! Compared to them, the best churches in Christendom, and the mass of professing Christians, in all countries, do not appear to be in a more advanced state of Christian excellence than the Church of Laodicea. (Rev. iii. 14-16.) May not a similar woe await them ? Whilst the learned dignitaries of the established church at Oxford, are diligently examining the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, with a view to establish certain speculative dogmas ; would it not, my Lord, be highly important that they should, from the same source, ascertain how far it is lawful for Christian men to wear weapons and serve in war. Assuredly, my Lord, no inquiry more closely connected with the interests of Christianity, or the happiness of mankind, can occupy the mind of a Christian philosopher.

However gratifying and instructive it may be to the lovers of peace, to be informed concerning the practices and opinions of the early Christians, yet their conduct can afford us no positive or safe rule for ours : we have the Gospel of Peace for our guidance ; by it we must stand or fall. But, my Lord, in the peculiar situation in which I am placed, I hope I may not be accused of egotism in quoting them in my own defence ; in quoting them with the view of proving, that, in withdrawing from the profession of arms, I have not been actuated by factitious motives, or a desire of acquiring notoriety ;

but that, on the contrary, I am sanctioned by the opinions, and examples, of some of the wisest and best men, in the purest ages of the Christian history.

Of the simple and amiable manners, and strict and unbending integrity of the early Christians, Pliny bore honourable testimony.* These manners which continued to distinguish the followers of Christ during the two first centuries, were greatly deteriorated during the third century, when it must be admitted that there were great numbers of men in the Roman armies who were called Christians. But these men, whatever name they might bear, were either idolaters, or persons of no fixed principles, moral or religious. The oath required to be taken by Roman soldiers, was not, with respect to Christians serving in their armies, rescinded, or dispensed with, till the following or fourth century. Instead of Christians being required to take the same oath as the Roman soldiers, this dispensation admitted them into their armies upon "swearing by God, by Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, and by the majesty of the emperor, which, next to God, was to be honoured and loved of mankind." Whether a real Christian, entertaining a proper reverence for the Deity, ought to submit to take such an oath, may justly be questioned; but its existence leads us to suppose that Christians, at that early period, had evidently departed

* Pliny's Letter, as Mr. Melmoth observes, in a note upon the passage, "Is esteemed the only genuine monument of ecclesiastical antiquity relating to the times immediately succeeding the apostles, it being written at most not above forty years after the death of St. Paul. It was preserved by the Christians themselves, as a clear and unsuspicious evidence of the purity of their doctrines, and is frequently appealed to by the early writers of the Church against the calumnies of their adversaries. See *PLINY. Encyclopædia Britannica.*

from their primitive simplicity and purity. Indeed, the gross darkness, which for so many succeeding ages nearly extinguished the lamp of Christianity, had then commenced. Men denominated Christians, became, as already observed, so far lost to every just sense of Christian duty, as to accept of heathen priesthods. As a proof of this, the council of Elvira of this century was forced to make several canons to forbid such scandalous usages, which canons are now extant.

Notwithstanding this deplorable state of things, and the still worse state that succeeded it, we find evidence, either direct or indirect, that at all periods of the Christian history, there were some witnesses who bore testimony to the inaccordancy of war with the precepts of Christ. In the twelfth canon of the council of Nice, (A. D. 325) a long period of excommunication is attached, as a penalty on the conduct of those persons who, having once, in the ardour of their early faith, renounced the military calling, were persuaded, by the force of bribes, to return to it. From hence we may infer, that the Nicene Fathers considered the military profession as altogether incompatible with a high state of Christian morality. What, my Lord, would the venerable fathers of this council have said to the half-pay military ecclesiastics of the present day?—to men who, being no longer wanted to kill the bodies of their brethren, *feel a call* to save their souls. Would not the members of the Council of Elvira have told our military preachers, and our military missionaries, and spouters at Exeter Hall, that they must undergo a long period of excommunication? What indeed would they

have said to the sophistries of Drs. Paley, Porteus, and Horsley? What, to the xxxviiith Article of the Church of England?

But to return from this digression and pursue my inquiries concerning the practices of Christians in later ages.

Lardner remarks on a work ascribed to Archelaus, a bishop of Mesopotamia, apparently written in the fourth century,—that he seems to have condemned all war as unlawful; for, relating that some Roman soldiers, charmed with the piety and generosity of Marcellus, were induced to embrace the Christian religion; he says that “they immediately forsook the profession of arms.”

In the following, or fifth century, Pope Leo declared it to be “contrary to the rules of the Church, that persons, after the action of penance, should revert to the warfare of the world.”* Epist. ii.

A synod held in England, under William the Conqueror, declared, that those who fought only for the hopes of reward, ought to do penance as for murder; following, probably, the decision of St. Augustine, “*Militare non est delictum, sed propter prædum militare peccatum est.*” Were this enforced in the present day, my Lord, how few fighting men would escape the most severe penance? Instead of being distinguished by the splendid insignia of military orders, and rewarded with pensions, not a few (according to the old regime) would be condemned to wear sackcloth, and

* *Contrariam esse ecclesiasticis, post pœnitentiæ actionem, redire ad militiam secularem.*—Quoted by Grotius, *De Jure Belli*, lib. I. cap. ii. 9.

observe a perpetual lent. We consider ourselves as happy in living in more enlightened times ; but, my Lord, as far as "Peace on earth" is concerned, we appear to have made no progress : on the contrary, as we have advanced in science and manners, we appear to have retrograded in the moral and pacific principles of the Gospel. May we not, my Lord, expect that the prelates and legislators of those times, which we are led to consider as times distinguished by mental darkness and superstition, will rise up in judgment against the prelates and legislators of modern times, and condemn them ?

The Patarines, or Gazari, the puritans of Italy in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, kept alive the cause of truth, liberty, and benevolence. They held several tenets in common with those now called Quakers, particularly with respect to oaths and war ; considering it as unlawful to bear arms, or to kill mankind.

To these succeeded other heralds of the Reformation, who, under the name of Waldenses, Albigenses, &c., were scattered over a great part of Europe, and of whom the following account is given by Robinson.

"Authentic records in France assure us that a people of a certain description were drawn from thence in the twelfth century. Bohemian records of equal authenticity inform us, that some of the same description arrived in Bohemia at the same time, and settled near a hundred miles from Prague, at Satz and Lann, on the river Eger, just on the borders of the kingdom. Almost two hundred years after, another undoubted

record of the same country mentions a people of the same description, some as burnt at Prague, and others as inhabiting the borders of the kingdom ; and a hundred and fifty years after that, we find a people of the same description settled by connivance in the metropolis, and several other parts of the kingdom. About one hundred and twenty years lower, we find a people of the same country, living under the protection of law, on the estate of prince Lechtenstien, exactly like the former, and about thirty or forty thousand in number. The religious character of this people is so very different from that of all others, that the likeness is not easily mistaken. They had no priests, but taught one another. They had no private property, for they held all things jointly. They executed no offices, and neither exacted nor took oaths. *They bore no arms, and rather chose to suffer than resist wrong.* They held every thing in the Church of Rome in abhorrence, and worshipped God, only by adoring his perfections, and endeavouring to imitate his goodness. They thought Christianity wanted no comment, and they professed the belief of that, by being baptized ; and their love to Christ and one another, by receiving the Lord's Supper. They aspired at neither wealth nor power, and their plan was industry. We have shown how highly probable it is that Bohemia afforded them work, wages, and a secure asylum, which was all they wanted. If these be facts, they are facts that do honour to human nature ; they exhibit in the great picture of the world, a few small figures in a back-ground, unstained with the blood, and unruffled with the disputes of their

fellow-creatures. It was their wisdom in their times, not to come forward to deliver apologies to the world, and creeds, with flattering prefaces, to princes ; the turbulence of the crowd would have caused the still voice of reason not to be heard."—*Ecclesiastical Researches*, p. 527.

The Anabaptists, at their first rise, and also the early Socinians, generally maintained the unlawfulness of all war, and of the military profession ; but I believe that both these sects have ceased to regard the military profession as altogether inaccordant with the precepts of Jesus ; which I much regret. The Society of Friends and the Moravians, both held in little repute by the learned and the great, are the only religious communities in our country, which now maintain the principle that *all* war is unlawful under the Gospel dispensation. The excellency of the moral precepts of these two sects, it is to be lamented, is greatly obscured by being mixed up with a variety of customs peculiar to themselves, which have little or nothing to do with religion or morality.

The hasty sketch here given of the history of the pacific principles of Christianity, will go far to show, that God has never, since the promulgation of the Gospel, left himself without faithful and true witnesses, who have, at the expence of their lives, testified to the unlawfulness of all war under the Christian dispensation.

I rejoice, my Lord, in the belief that the defence of the pacific principles of the Gospel, is not now, as heretofore, confined to any particular sect or commu-

nity of Christians. A new era appears to have arrived, and societies of men have sprung up since the termination of the late long and expensive war, in England, on the continent of Europe, and in America, for the professed purpose of promoting permanent and universal peace. Like the Bible Societies, these Societies consist of men of all religious creeds, and their object is, assuredly, highly important : but if the Bible Societies have had their opponents among the “many wise, and many mighty,” we cannot wonder at the opposition Peace Societies have had to encounter : but I trust that their cause is the cause of truth ; and that it must and will triumph over all opposition. Prophecy assures us that these hopes are not built on a sandy foundation ; and amid the gloom which at present obscures our political horizon, it is cheering to read of the triumphs of the Gospel in the early and more pure ages of Christianity.

Having, my Lord, so largely referred to the works of the early Christian writers ; your Grace may be led to suppose, that I either am, or wish to pass myself off for a literary character : I think it, therefore, necessary to observe, that the quotations I have made are generally at second-hand. I have not, my Lord, like you, a valuable library to refer to : nor, if I had this advantage, do I profess to have the ability of critically ascertaining the meaning of the originals I have quoted. The historical matter I have introduced in this letter, is chiefly on the authority of Mr. Clarkson, Mr. John Gurney, Mr. J. W. Fox, and the anonymous author of the *Pictures of War*. If I have, by any of these,

been led into error, it will be an easy matter for your Grace, or any of the learned clergy, whose services you can command, to set me right. By showing me that I am in error, you will confer on me a personal favour, for I have no cause to advocate but that of truth ; the truth as it is delivered in the Gospel of Peace.

I have now, my Lord, travelled through a large portion of my undertaking. To your Grace, and those who may peruse these letters, I fear they may appear dull and tedious : to myself, the writing them has been a most gratifying employment ; as, at every step I have advanced in my work, fresh conviction has poured in upon my mind, that the principles I have advocated, are strictly consonant with the revealed will of God.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your most obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

LETTER X.

THE CONCLUDING LETTER.

Most Reverend Sir,

I have now shown to your Grace, to the best of the ability God has blessed me with, that war—war defensive as well as offensive—is inaccordant with just notions of natural and revealed religion.

I have, in the first place, endeavoured to show, and I hope not unsuccessfully, that war is altogether repugnant to those purposes for which an all-wise and merciful Creator has formed and designed us—that it is contrary to natural religion. That the formation of our bodies, and the dispositions implanted in our minds, indicate that we are intended for higher and holier purposes than killing, robbing, or defrauding our fellow creatures. That men are designed by their Creator to make each other happy. That even the brute creation set us an example, that we should do well to follow. They are kind to those of the same species : they do not, like men, devour each other.

In the next place, I have endeavoured to show that war of any kind is inaccordant with the spirit of the

Old Testament, and that the wars in which the Jews were engaged, do not afford the slightest sanction to Christians for engaging in warfare, unless they can show, like the Jews, a direct sanction from God for doing so.

Lastly, I have endeavoured to demonstrate that war is utterly repugnant to the spirit of Jesus ; to the precepts and example which he left us for our guidance. That "as contrary as cruelty is to mercy, tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed to the meekness and gentleness of the Christian religion." That the moment a Christian engages in warfare he relinquishes those doctrines which peculiarly distinguish Christians from all other human beings—that he *loses caste* ; he ceases to be a Christian—he deserts the standard of Jesus, and becomes the slave of the world.

Added to this mass of evidence, I have presumed to address a Letter to your Grace on the testimony of prophecy with the view of showing that, if the religions established throughout Europe sanction their professors to follow the profession of arms, they are all antichristian : that the only hope of the friend of Peace is in regenerated Christianity.

The evidence I have adduced, though circumstantial, to show that war is unlawful, or rather that it is sinful, to a professor of Christianity, is so clear and decisive, that I might here have laid down my pen, supposing my task accomplished ; but, wishing to show that war is as unwise as it is wicked ; that it is as much against our interest as our religion ; I have addressed two letters to your Grace, one on the causes of war, and

another on its evils. The conclusion to be drawn from these is that all wars are both unwise and wicked; but that God from motives of kindness and benevolence severely punishes us here, in order to open our eyes to the atrocity of war, and to fit and prepare us for more exalted happiness in the future world.

To these I have added some of the most popular arguments, urged in favour of war and the profession of arms, with answers thereto: and in conclusion, I have addressed a letter to your Grace on the practices of the early Christians, and their opinions on these important topics; showing that they were in strict unison with those principles which I have advocated—with the principles laid down by the Prince of Peace. Permit me, my Lord, to express a hope that the learned writers of the Oxford Tracts, who have so largely availed themselves of the opinions of the early Christian Fathers in order to establish the peculiar doctrines of the Church of England, will become the zealous friends of Christ, in his exalted character of PRINCE OF PEACE. That the same zeal and diligence they have displayed in inquiring into the religious opinions of these early Fathers will be extended to ascertain their practices and opinions regarding war and the profession of arms. Should they find them to be such as I have stated them, I indulge in the hope that they will be consistent—that they will become the staunch friends of PEACE ON EARTH, and the avowed enemies of all war.

The opinion of the writers of the Oxford Tracts, viz. that the Liturgy and articles of the Church of England are by no means distinctly pointed out in the

Scriptures, is by no means a novel opinion. This has long been the opinion of many well-informed members of the Church of England, and also of learned Dissenters. It has also long been the opinion of the Church of Rome, regarding many of their doctrines. The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge is based upon this opinion; and, for this reason, they never give the Bible without the prayer book, as a key for interpreting it. On this subject the late Bishop Marsh is very explicit.

In a sermon preached before that society in 1811, he says, "Without the Liturgy, men want a guide to lead them to the Established Church. Without the Liturgy, the Bible may be made to lead them into doctrine and discipline the most discordant with our own. Where the Church of England, therefore, is established, the Bible and the Liturgy should be united." This, my Lord, is very intelligible.

In one important point, the Church of Rome, the Church of England, and Puseyism, are agreed. They all make tradition, if I rightly understand them, the key for interpreting the Scripture. They all take a human and fallible guide; instead of an inspired and infallible one. If, my Lord, the book of divine inspiration is imperfect, What human authority can improve it?

So long as men wander in the thorny paths of tradition, to expect that they will reap the fruits of the Gospel of Peace, is a folly equal to that of expecting grapes to grow on thorns, or figs on thistles.

The whole of the evidence I have advanced, in the preceeding letters, regarding the unlawfulness of war,

though inferential, shows as plainly as if literally expressed, that war, and the profession of arms are unlawful to Christians, "AND THAT MEN WHO HAVE NICE NOTIONS ABOUT RELIGION HAVE NO BUSINESS TO BE SOLDIERS."* I rejoice, my Lord, in the indications given by the signs of the times, that the love of military fame is on the decline; that its false lustre is fast dying away; and in proportion as it decays, truth—the truth which Jesus revealed—the truth for which he lived, and for which he died, will acquire strength, and "Peace on earth, and good-will toward men" will become universal. "In proportion as *this* truth shall find a tongue, wars will cease."

It is urged by many that the view I have taken of the military profession, by the destruction of long established principles and usages, would tend to promote disorder and revolution in the world. This is a question deserving consideration; but is the question at issue fairly stated? The real question for consideration appears to be this, Is it safer to continue old errors and principles, which, though maintained for fifteen hundred years by nearly the whole Christian world, or to return to truths and principles, which, (though considered as new) are in reality much older—as old as the Gospel—which are truly the Gospel itself? We mistake *patriotism for philanthropy*.—*The patriotism of Greece and Rome* for the philanthropy of the Gospel; a natural consequence of classical education. But, "Christianity, (says Bishop Watson) in its regards, steps beyond the bounds of national advantage, in quest

* See Note, page 16.

of universal good ; it does not encourage patriotism, in opposition to general benignity ; or prompt to love our country at the expence of our integrity ; or allow us to indulge our passions to the detriment of thousands. It looks upon all the human race as children of the same Father, and wishes them equal blessings ; in ordering us to do good, to love as brethren, to forgive injuries, and to study peace, it quite annihilates the disposition for martial glory, and utterly debases the pomp of war."

The question reduces itself into little room : Is it safer to take expedience for our guide ; to continue in opinions and practices, having the sanction of fifteen hundred years, or to go still further back—to Jesus and his apostles ? Is it safer to continue under the banner of Mars ; or boldly, and in good earnest, to join the standard of Jesus ? This happy consummation, so devoutly to be wished, cannot rationally be expected so long as the priesthood proclaim to their flocks that it is lawful for them to engage in war when sanctioned by their chief magistrate. If your Grace possess such a power as that contained in the xxxviiith Article it must be evident to you that the heads of the other churches in Europe possess the same power ; and that the subjects of the contending states may legally murder and destroy each other without being answerable at the supreme bar of God for conduct so revolting. In a word, that the chief magistrates are the only persons in Europe that are answerable to God for their own actions, as well as for the actions of their subjects ; I need not, my Lord, say that this is con-

trary to the general tenor of revelation, which teaches us that every man must bear his own burthen—that we must all receive according to the deeds done in the flesh, whether they be good or evil. (See Ezek. xviii.)

If, my Lord, in addressing the preceding letters to your Grace, I have, considering the high and dignified station held by your Grace, used language in any way unbecoming a private individual in a more humble station of life, I entreat your Grace, to attribute it to the strength of my feelings. When we feel strongly, it is almost impossible to avoid using strong language: and what subjects can more strongly excite the feelings of a good man, than the blessings of peace, or the horrors of war.

We have one proof, I grieve to say only one, of Christians upon an extensive scale acting upon the principles I have advocated. When William Penn, and his peaceful followers first settled themselves in Pennsylvania, instead of building a fort and establishing a military force for their protection, agreeably to the general custom of Europeans, they entirely divested themselves of all warlike instruments, whether for offence, or defence. Though they were surrounded by tribes of Indians of a warlike and ferocious character, and who were in the habit of visiting other European settlers with destruction and death, yet William Penn, and his men of peace dwelt among them in security, without sword or gun,—without lock or bolt. Mr. Clarkson says, “Whatever the quarrels of the Pennsylvanian

Indians were with others, they uniformly respected, and held as it were sacred, the territories of William Penn." "The Pennsylvanians (*says Oldmixon*) never lost man, woman, or child, which neither the colony of Maryland, nor that of Virginia could say, no more than the great colony of New England."

Although many instances might here be adduced, of smaller bodies of men, and of individuals, placing implicit reliance on the providence of God, having been delivered in cases of great danger; yet, it may also be remarked, that to such facts may be opposed, others where men, placing their trust in God, instead of being thus delivered, have been exposed to every species of suffering and even to death itself. This was the case with the Society of Friends at their first rise; and this to our great disgrace, among Protestants; it was the case among Protestants themselves at the time of the Reformation; Protestants persecuted Protestants: it was the case with the early Christian martyrs: it was the case with our Lord and his apostles.

In adverting to the preceding historical facts, I am therefore far from wishing to infer that I believe an implicit trust in God, and a patient acquiescence in his commands, will uniformly secure to us indemnity from suffering. This would be to expect our reward in this world, instead of looking for it in the next.

Though the facts which I have been stating may not prove that God, at all times, delivers those who trust in him in cases of imminent peril; yet, they plainly show that he frequently, and under very unpromising appearances, protects those who rely on him: they also

exhibit, in a very striking point of view, the surprising effect that the non-resistance of evil has in subduing angry and revengeful feelings, even in minds the most savage and untutored. Though reliance on this principle may not, in all cases, secure men from violence, yet it will be found, on the aggregate, like all the principles and precepts delivered by our Lord, to be the very best to promote even our temporal interests. Our religion, however, so far from promising worldly prosperity, as the reward of our obedience, teaches us plainly that suffering is the path to moral greatness. That it is, in the established course of the divine government, necessary to the formation of exalted virtue, we must conclude from God making "the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. ii. 10.

Though addressing myself to your Grace, as the spiritual head of the Church of Christ, on one of the most important subjects connected with the prosperity and safety of that church, I crave your permission to avail myself of this opportunity to address a few words, under your cover, to the talented and eloquent female writers of the present day. It is to ask to implore them, to avail themselves of every opportunity to advocate the sacred—the GOSPEL cause of PEACE ON EARTH. Till this shall be established, Christianity shorn of its brightest, its most lovely feature, must remain vulnerable to the scoffs and jeers of unbelievers. It is peculiarly the duty, as it is the glory, of females to soften the hardness—the ferocity of men—of Christian men. In ages less enlightened, females, alas! have been the defenders of war, and warriors; but I trust this delusion

is fast passing away, and a brighter era approaching, if not with rapid, with sure steps. The thirst for military fame, and the admiration of military heroes are on the wane. I intreat my beloved country-women to aid in slaying the hydra which has so long been preying on the vitals of Christianity. I intreat them, as they value the PRINCE OF PEACE, the rock, the sure foundation of their most exalted hopes, whether they regard time or eternity, to advocate, whenever opportunity shall offer, the sacred cause of PEACE. I intreat them as they value their holy religion ; as they value Jesus its celestial author, their Saviour and Judge—as they value the present happiness and eternal salvation of all mankind—to stand forward as the advocates of that cause, for which Jesus lived, and for which he died ; leaving them an example that they should follow his steps.

Before I dismiss the subject of the unlawfulness of war, or of the profession of arms, permit me to notice a question that has often been asked me, and with a degree of confidence as if it were unanswerable. The question, my Lord, is this : What would you do in case a robber, probably an assassin, were to break into your house ? would you not, if possessed of fire arms, shoot such a one, as the safest means of preserving not only your own life and property, but the lives of your innocent wife, your children, and domestics ? Before answering this question, this *argumentum ad hominem*, I would observe, that many instances might be adduced of persons similarly circumstanced having, through

fear, taken the lives of innocent persons—innocent at least of any felonious intention. I would further observe that in cases of house-breaking, murder would be of rare occurrence, were not the house-breaker led to suppose that I had fire-arms, and should certainly shoot him if he did not shoot me. In this case would he not act on the principle of self-defence ; the very principle which Christians themselves defend ? But allowing the statement to its fullest extent ; allowing that I had just reason to be assured that the house-breaker intended murder, I should say that it was my duty, as a disciple of Jesus, to refrain from taking his life. Neither the example, or precepts of Christ and his Apostles would justify me in doing so.

One very general objection to the doctrine of non-resistance is, that it is unnatural ; and that self-defence is one of the first principles implanted by the great Creator, not only in man, but in the whole animal creation. The question for the consideration of a Christian is, not what the laws of nature seem to sanction, but what the laws of God actually command. I would, with all becoming deference, ask your Grace, whether one great purpose of the Gospel is not to enable its professors to overcome those animal propensities, which, whether natural, or acquired by habit, or education, tend to make men unhappy here, and to unfit them for a state of superior happiness hereafter. To say that an action is lawful, because it is natural, is a conclusion that Christianity does not sanction ; and the very assertion of it ought to excite suspicion and inquiry. There are many propensities of a sensual nature, which

are equally as natural to us as the principle of self-defence, which no well-informed Christian will ever think of defending.

Another objection to the doctrine of non-resistance is, that, though it might be very safe and proper for individuals to adopt it, it would be ruinous for nations; that their enemies, taking advantage of their simplicity, would make them *hewers of wood and drawers of water*. This apprehension appears to arise out of a practical disbelief in the superintending providence of God, and from men entertaining low views of the paternal character of the Deity, and of their duty to each other as brethren. Nations, with great complacency, admit that the wise Creator is capable of ruling the elements; but, from their conduct, they seem to think that they are much more competent to form moral laws for the government of this lower world than those which He, in condescension, has graciously revealed to us. The great misfortune is, that men think themselves of too much consequence; and, intent upon reforming nations, they overlook their own reformation. The question for the consideration of individuals is, what the revealed will of God requires of them in their capacity of private Christians; and having ascertained this—which is no very difficult task—to pursue the path of duty and obedience through good report and evil report, regardless of personal advantages or disadvantages. When individuals shall thus act, the road to national reformation will become easy and bloodless; and the path to universal and lasting peace direct and

certain. Arbitrary princes, as already observed, will then find no soldiers.

It may be highly important, not only to individuals, but to legislators, and to ministers of the gospel, to examine whether this principle of self-defence, so natural to animals, and so zealously contended for by men, is not the probable cause of a very large portion of the barbarous murders that disgrace Christian nations. Is it not to save his life? Is it not on this very principle of self-defence, this natural principle, that the robber is converted into the assassin? It may also be justly questioned, whether forbearance is not more likely to save life than resistance.

Another, and a very frequent cause of assassination, arises from the severity of our penal code. Were it possible to imagine that there could be found a grave lawyer, or legislator, deeply read in the statutes at large, but entirely uninformed concerning the jurisprudence contained in the Old and New Testaments; such a one—if such a one could be found—being led to look upon Christianity, as it is technically said to be, *part and parcel* of our laws, would naturally expect to find in our Scriptures, that housebreaking, horse-stealing, poaching, &c. &c., would be treated of as deserving of the highest penalty of the law. With what astonishment would such a one read the following: “If a thief be found breaking up, and he be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him: for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it

be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall (not be hung by his neck till he is dead, but) RESTORE DOUBLE." Exod. xxii. 2—4. What would the Jewish legislator, were he now to appear, say to our sanguinary code?—to our spring-guns, men-traps, and instruments of human destruction? When we consider the lenity of the Jewish laws, and take into our account that the crime of murder was then of rare occurrence, may we not conclude that the great severity of modern laws, instead of checking, promotes crime, and that it blunts those sensibilities which God has mercifully planted in the human breast. When legislators, with so little concern, shed human blood, can we wonder at the frequent recurrence of murder and assassination?

If there be any thing of fanaticism, or of zeal without knowledge, in thus acting upon the principle of non-resistance of evil, I intreat your Grace,—I intreat the clergy,—I intreat my readers to point it out to me. For my own part, after bestowing much and patient consideration on the subject, I perceive nothing fanatical, nothing unreasonable, in receiving and acting upon this precept to the extent I have mentioned. The conduct recommended, seems to be the natural consequence of faith; of faith of the most simple and rational kind; faith that teaches "that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 6. Is it not necessary, my Lord, in countries where Christianity is established by law, that its professors should examine it, and ascertain how far they can innocently engage in war?

The soldier, when ordered on the forlorn hope,

impelled, either by the sense of military duty, or the fear of punishment, or the hope of the praise of fallible men, or the dread of their censure, meets death without flinching; and receives our praise. The Christian, conscious that the eye of God is ever upon him, instead of sacrificing the life of another to save his own, awaits with heroism a death which seems unavoidable. Which, my Lord, is chargeable with fanaticism? He who sacrifices his life to the bubble called honour, and to his duty to man? or he who loses his life from a sense of duty to that Being who can and will reward him; who loses his life in order that he may find it?

The great question concerning the lawfulness of war, or of the profession of arms, is a question exclusively religious, as has been frequently remarked; and, in determining it, worldly policy and expedience ought to be banished from the counsels of the individual. The books of nature and of revelation are open before him; he is diligently to read these in order to ascertain his personal duties; and he is to obey God rather than man. I am, my Lord, painfully aware that the views of duty which I have deduced from these sacred sources are opposed to those of your Grace, and the opinions generally received by a very great majority of those esteemed wise and good; but, with a devout wish to ascertain the truth, and no wish to serve the purposes of any sect or party, I have calmly stated my reasons for dissent. These reasons, supported as they are by Scripture, I cannot doubt, will, in due time, become as extensive as the Scriptures from which they are drawn. If they are true, they must prevail; if they are false,

let them be exposed; and their advocate held up to deserved scorn and derision.

The hero and the statesman may yet, for ages to come, triumph over Christianity, over humanity, and over peace. The worldly-wise man may still continue to glory in his wisdom, the mighty man in his might, and the rich man in his riches; but let the Christian bear in mind, that "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God," and that in the propagation of the Gospel, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," so it is probable that he will, by the same means, restore it to its pristine purity; and, consequently, to its energy over the human mind. For his consolation, (and it cannot be too often repeated,) the advocate for peace knows, on evidence as sure as that on which Christianity is established, that the folly and wickedness of the present belligerent and savage system, will be made manifest by that "knowledge of the Lord," of which the whole earth shall be full. And, though the time may yet be distant, he is assured that "God shall judge among the nations; and shall work conviction in many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

After publishing my Letter to my Sovereign, George the Fourth, it seemed incumbent upon me, (as I have already stated,) in the very peculiar and insulated situation in which that letter placed me, as an alien or out-cast from military society, to show to the world, by

further discussion, that, in withdrawing myself from the profession of arms, I had not only acted according to the dictates of conscience, but that I had also been guided by sound principles of religion and morality ;—that I was not an enthusiast, but that I had diligently studied the sacred word of truth ; had regulated my conduct by it ; and had, as I professed, “ spoken forth the words of truth and soberness : ” that, weighing the interests of a future life against those of the present, I had not acted unwisely, or inconsiderately, in preferring the former. With these views, my Lord, in a series of Letters, I gave to the world my *APOLOGY for retiring from the profession of arms*. With exactly the same views, I have addressed these Letters to your Grace, and to the public, but more especially to the Clergy. From their subscribing the articles of the established church, it may be inferred that they consider war, and the profession of arms, as lawful to the professors of Christianity. From the peculiar situation in which I stand, I feel that I, and the public, have a right to call upon you, and the established clergy, to show either from Scripture, or plain inferences from it, that it is lawful for Christians, when *sanctioned by the magistrate to wear weapons and to serve in the wars*. For this mistaken principle has caused rivers of blood to flow. If rulers draw the sword, is it not natural for subjects to imitate their example ? And, when excited by stimulating causes, is it not to be expected that they will use the sword in their own defence ? What stimulants, I would respectfully ask your Grace, can be more pungent than poverty and want ? The energies of the

industrious have been expended in war ; their energies have been mortgaged for ages to come ; and the productive classes, the honey-bees of society are left to suffer. Of their miseries and privations the Parliamentary Reports bear ample testimony ? The xxxviiith article of the Established Church, one cause of these miseries, surely ought to be washed out with the tears of repentance. Erase, my Lord, I beseech you, from your Liturgy, this libel upon the holy religion of Jesus, one great source of the infidelity, the vice, the selfishness, that deluge the world, and threaten universal revolution.

I hope, my Lord, in the peculiar situation in which I am placed, as a kind of outcast from military society, in which it has been my lot to pass a large portion of my life, I may be permitted, without being chargeable with egotism, to say a few words concerning myself.

Sixteen years have elapsed since the publication of my Letter to my Sovereign, George the Fourth, which I have now submitted to your inspection. During that long period I can assure your Grace that a day has not passed in which I have felt regret for having written that letter. I may, as I often have felt that it was not more worthy of the solemn occasion on which it was written ; but so far from feeling sorrow or regret, for the step which that letter announced, I have, as my years increased, gone on my way rejoicing ; and impressed with sentiments of gratitude to the Great Giver of all good, that he endowed me with courage—with the moral courage, to write it. I use the word courage, because I believe that it required more courage to write that letter than to fight a battle. I can further

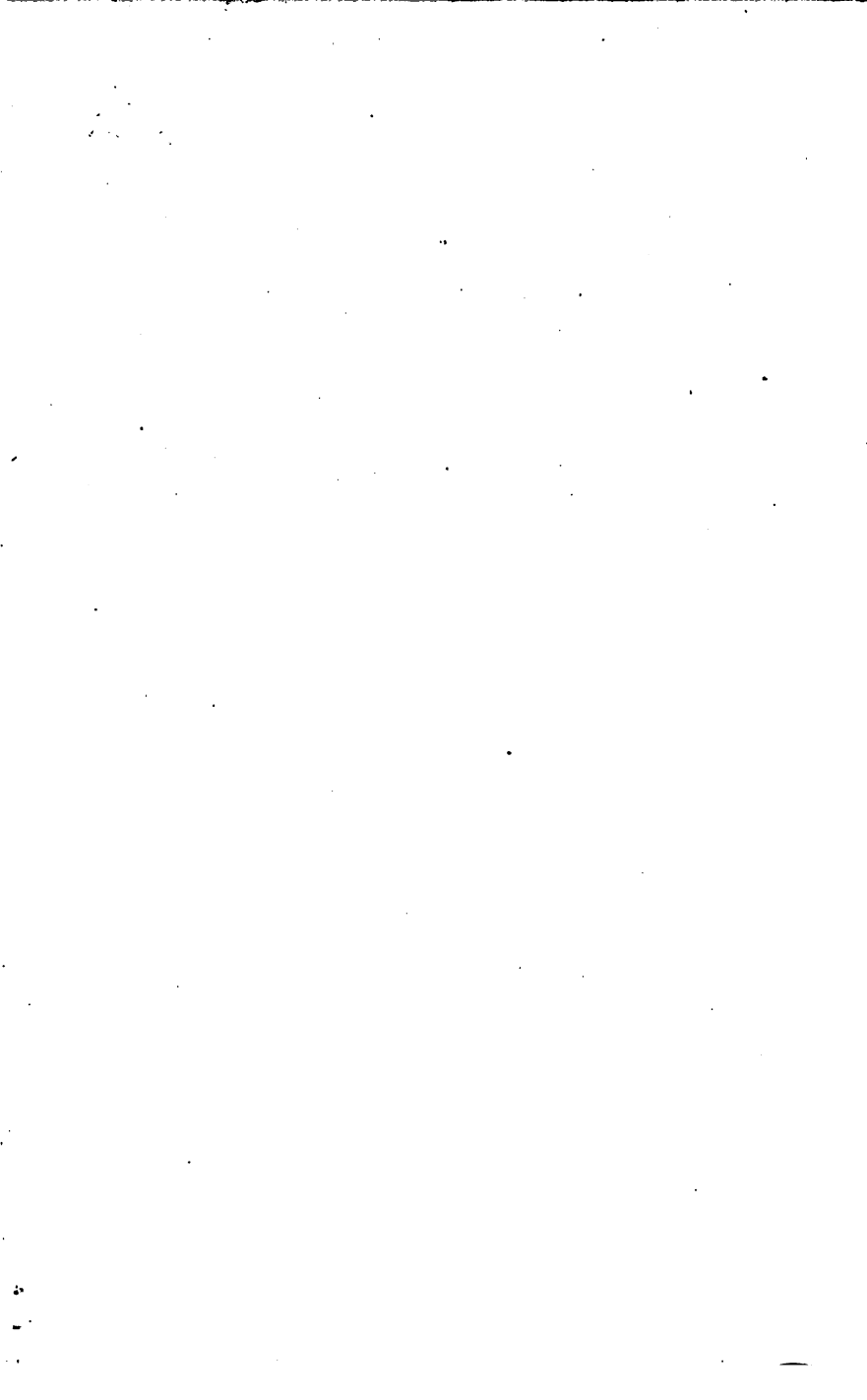
assure your Grace, that since publishing it, I have never regretted the loss of half my income; so far from it, I have been convinced of the truth of our Lord's assurance, that no one can make any sacrifice in his cause, the cause of truth, without receiving more than an adequate reward here. The same remark I can with truth apply to the sharer of my joys and privations. God has been graciously pleased to prolong both our lives beyond what is generally considered as the boundary of human life: to grant to us a happy old age; to bless us with contented minds and a larger portion of health and enjoyment than generally falls to the lot of persons, like ourselves, far advanced in life.

And now, my Lord, I have only once more to implore the blessing of the great Ruler of nations upon my feeble endeavours to promote the sacred cause of peace. May He, in future ages, render our nation as glorious in cultivating peace, as it has hitherto been successful in war and conquest! But whilst, with Bishops and Missionaries, we also send armies to the most distant parts of the Globe, may we not fear that our prayers for peace will, by a righteous and just God, be regarded rather as a mockery and insult, than as an indication of a serious and sound frame of mind.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your obedient Servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.







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The last thoughts of a naval officer

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